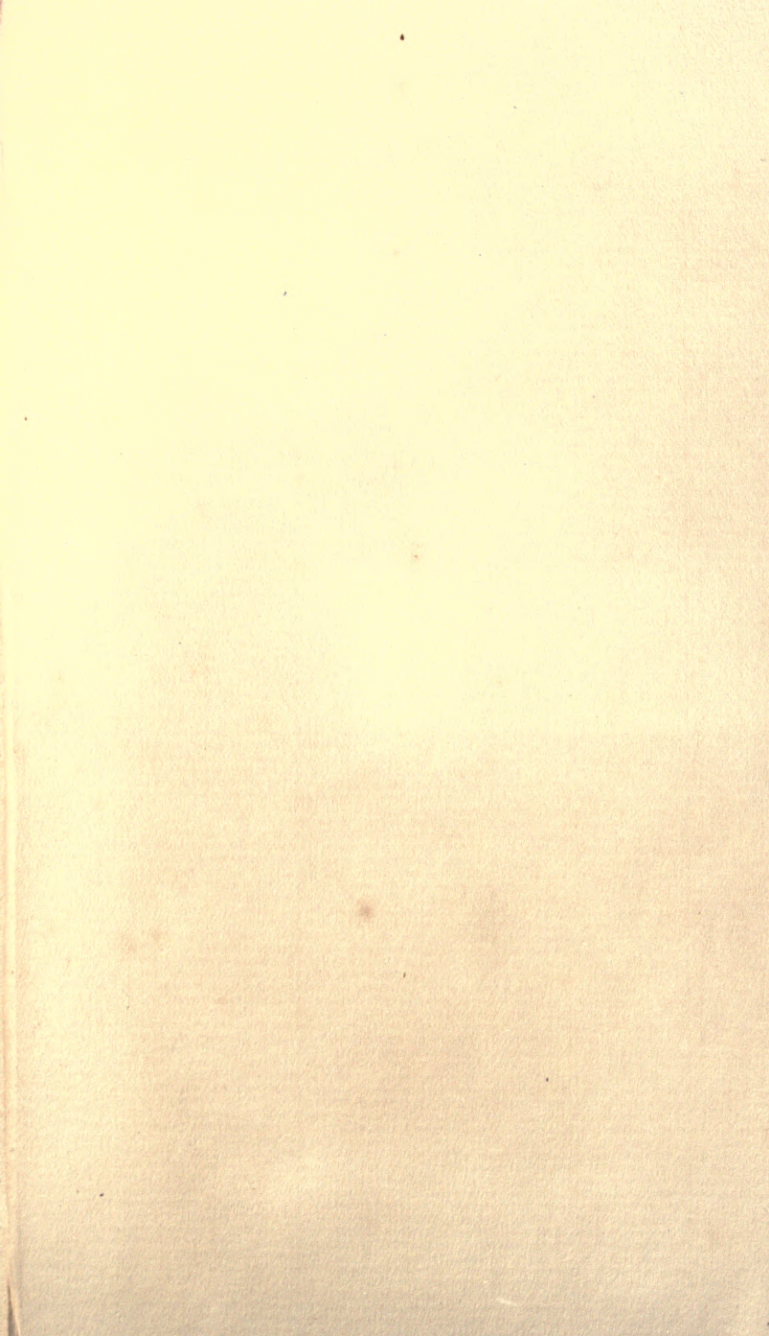


AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE
IN THE MAKING

LADY POORE

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AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE
IN THE MAKING

1860—1903



Photo. by G. Vandyk Ltd., 41, Buckingham Palace Road

LADY POORE (CAPTAIN'S WIFE)

1893

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE
IN THE MAKING
1860—1903

BY

LADY POORE

Author of

"RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE"

With Portraits

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TO
R. P.
WHO MADE ME
AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE

2066209

PREFACE

THE little people whose lives, unimportant enough in themselves, have yet been packed with interest and variety, have the leisure and the liberty often denied to the great ones of the earth. They are lookers-on or, at best, supernumeraries. Detail is their *forte*, and their memories, unburdened with great matters, can supply clothing for whole regiments of bare facts. They can, by re-creating the atmosphere and reconstructing the scenes of a bygone period with which they were familiar, show the young folk of to-day how their parents and grandparents were treated, how they felt and acted, lived and loved. Sometimes the readers of such recollections cannot see the wood for the trees, but in the biographies and autobiographies of the great it is not always possible to see the trees for the wood.

To the indulgence of those who found something to like in the "Recollections of an Admiral's Wife" I commend these footnotes to history.

IDA POORE.

February, 1917.

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LADY POORE (CAPTAIN'S WIFE), 1893 . *Frontispiece*

COMMANDER RICHARD POORE (NAVAL
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PART I

A DEAN'S DAUGHTER, 1860—1866

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE IN THE MAKING

CHAPTER I

EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS

AN event which left a deep impression on my infant mind was the departure of a much-loved German governess. Stowed away in my memory I keep the recollection of my farewell to Fräulein Wappner, and can call up the picture of our leave-taking, the feeling of the tear-wetted veil of brown gauze which brushed my cheek as she kissed me, the sound of her words, "Good-bye, darling child." It was at the "Gates of Ballybog," as we called the twin humps of heather-covered rock between which the high road ran, that we said farewell in 1863 to this good friend. I was then three years old, and whether I walked or was carried or driven to this spot, three-quarters of a mile from our own gates of Parknasilla in Kerry, I cannot recall; but I remember the wet brown veil. And yet my elder brothers and sisters know that Fräulein

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Wappner said good-bye to us in Dublin! This discrepancy puzzles me.

It must have been in the same year that my father's eldest brother, John Graves, a barrister, came to stay at Parknasilla, and his valet, a man of many accomplishments, pruned all the apple trees in our neglected orchard, which fruited pleasingly in the following year. I cannot remember Uncle John, nor yet his valet, but I have never forgotten the toy cock and hen my uncle brought me from Paris. They were seated side by side, contrary to the usual practice of domestic fowls, in a little basket-work nest lined with dyed moss. The birds had real feathers on their hard bodies of what I heard called "composition," and when they moulted from much handling they looked very horrid and naked, with patches of dry glue here and there where their feathers had been stuck on. In those days children had few expensive toys, and I found most of my playthings in the *débris* of the house and garden. Grouse and poultry feathers begged from the cook, lobster claws from the same benefactress, fir cones, horse chestnuts, laburnum pods, little bits of rock containing what we called "Irish diamonds," sea shells, and even empty pill boxes were my toys. We were a large family, of which I was the youngest, and at Christmas time or on my birthday a book or a doll from my parents and some trifle from my elder brothers and sisters appeared an adequate recognition of the occasion. I was not very careful of my possessions, but the doll my mother gave me when I was still quite small inspired me with respect, if not affection. It

EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS

was impossible to take liberties with a personage so large and so unbending. Her arms, legs, head and neck were of china, and her features were severely Grecian. Her dress was of bright blue cashmere with clouded glass buttons and was trimmed with white braid, and she had a hooded cloak to match. Her boots, which were of china, and consequently fixtures, were of a pinkish opalescent hue, with gold laces and tassels, and on her head, which was thickly covered with pale yellow china curls, she wore permanently a golden coronal, high in front and diminishing towards the sides and back. This piece of magnificence debarred her from wearing a hat, but the hood of her blue cloak, though scarcely in keeping with her classical style, could be drawn over her head, tiara and all. She was called, I do not know why, *Alice Maud Mary*, after Queen Victoria's second daughter, Grand-Duchess of Hesse, and she was so regal that it was impossible to make a friend of her, so she was still quite good when she was given away. I hope the "poor little girl" who got her stood less in awe of her than I did.

Our nursery fare was very simple. My breakfast consisted of bread and butter, an egg, and milk or weak tea; but the bread was generally brown and home-made in big flat loaves baked on what in Ireland is called a *griddle*, in Scotland a *girdle*. I feel sure the Irish form is the more correct, for it must be first cousin to *grill* and *gridiron*. We three little ones—Charley, Bob, and I—were separated from the elder batch of six brothers and sisters by a gap of six years,

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and escaped the Spartan *régime* of cocoa and porridge ("stirabout," we called it) for breakfast by appearing on the scene when the need for economy was less pressing and a more varied diet at all meals was permitted in the nursery and schoolroom. I had been a wretchedly delicate baby, and my beloved nurse, Betsy, often told me later that she feared she would never rear me. "Let her die, Miss Robinson, let her die. You'll never 'rare' that one," Thomas Halsey, porter of Trinity College, Dublin, would say when Betsy passed his gateway with me in her arms. But Betsy insisted upon keeping me alive, though I lay "on a weeshy little down pillow" for the first three months of my life and "a body 'd be almost afeared" to touch me.

CHAPTER II

THE UPPER CASTLE YARD

My father, a Fellow of Trinity College, had become Dean of the Chapel Royal in 1860, and we lived in the Upper Castle Yard opposite the viceregal quarters. The first tune I remember was the "Salute" which announced the entrance or exit of the Lord Lieutenant, and my first love was Armine Wodehouse, the then Lord Lieutenant's (Lord Kimberley's) younger son. When I acquired a very pretty hat, the crown of which consisted of a poor spatch-cocked kingfisher, I was not

THE UPPER CASTLE YARD

happy till I had paraded it for Armine's approval, and I think of him still, though it is many years since his death and many more since I saw him, as a neatly-made little boy of five years old in a black velveteen suit and black silk stockings, just as he looked to me when I sat on his father's knee wearing my blue-winged hat in the drawing-room at Dublin Castle—fifty-one years ago !

I used to have toothache very badly when I was small—perhaps it was due to the inevitable cutting of double teeth—and it would sometimes wake me up crying in the night. Then Betsy would take me out of my crib and, sitting in the big rocking-chair, rock and rock me till I fell asleep. The nursery was at the top of the house and looked out into a horrible slum called Ship Street, where there were public-houses and barracks and brawlers, male and female ; and as I lay in Betsy's arms the cries and shoutings came up and the light of the street lamps flickered on the wall opposite our windows. Now and again we used to hear the queer staccato notes of a dulcimer played by a little ragged boy, and I thought his music beautiful. I wonder if the dulcimer is played in the back streets of Dublin now.

My father was too busy to see much of us children, for in addition to his clerical duties he was Almoner to the Lord Lieutenant, and investigations respecting "petitioners," as the petitioners almost invariably signed themselves, had to be made by him before they were accepted as beneficiaries or rejected as frauds. He was very kind to us, and we three little ones were

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immensely proud of being noticed by him. One winter, while staying at Birr with Lord Rosse (constructor of the famous telescope and father of Sir Charles Parsons, inventor of the steam turbine), he slipped on the polished floor of the hall during a game of battledore, played Badminton fashion across a net, and broke his arm. When it was nearly well again the Dublin surgeon ordered him to work his hand about in a bucket of hot bran-mash, with a view to restoring the flexibility of the muscles, and every evening in the children's hour the bucket was solemnly brought into the drawing-room and set down by his side on one of our little walnut-wood chairs. One evening it would be placed on Charley's, the next on Bob's, and the third on mine, and to this day there are the marks on my chair left by the base of the bucket, which was over-hot on one occasion and, being shifted, described two intersecting circles on the seat. Alas ! that little chair is no longer mine. Many years afterwards I discovered that those chairs never belonged to us juniors at all ; we had merely inherited the use of them when outgrown by our elder brothers and sisters.

Charley was three years older than myself, and Bob a year and a half. They were as unlike one another in most respects as they well could be, but they were both unusually clever. Charley, though not robust, was wiry, a dreadful fidget, and filled at times with an uncanny spirit of mischief amounting almost to demoniacal possession. One Sunday morning while all our elders were at church he decoyed me into the drawing-room, where a bright fire was burning, and,

THE UPPER CASTLE YARD

taking up the poker, thrust it between the bars and left it till red-hot. "It won't hurt you a bit," he said, holding my hand firmly in one of his and the poker in the other, and before I had time to be frightened he had lightly "branded" the back of my right hand. Of course I screamed and ran to Betsy for comfort and *Pommade Divine*, our nursery panacea for burns and bruises, and to this day I have a small round scar to remind me that Charley, kindest of brothers, was once a cruel tyrant. I think now that he was far more ailing and nervous than anyone realised in days when children's "fancies" were more lightly regarded than now.

He had a perfect ear for music and played the piano with a touch both light and sure, but when he should have been practising decorously he would cause his hearers acute anguish by playing the bass in one key and the treble in another. Among other notable deeds of ingenious naughtiness Charley committed the atrocity of pricking with a pin the nose of almost every portrait in my mother's album. His own, I know, was excepted. He must have been between eight and nine then, a skinny little boy with very pretty bright blue eyes, a mop of yellow curls, and many freckles.

Bob was plump, pretty and easy-going, with a beaming smile and a peculiar enjoyment of monotonous noises made by himself. He would drum with his heels or repeat a thousand times in succession some meaningless polysyllable such as *Tatara*, or twang upon a piece of elastic till Charley was nearly beside himself with exasperation. They both devoured books and

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had an amazing capacity for assimilating miscellaneous statistics and facts of all descriptions, and Charley's remarkable range of knowledge and Bob's extraordinarily retentive memory amaze me to this day. In their childhood they would pore over the tonnage of ships, the number of barrels of stout exported by Guinness, and the scores made by celebrated cricketers, Charley perched on a high chair with one leg tucked under him, Bob lying under a table or on the hearth-rug, with his chin between his hands, tapping away with one toe until Charley fell upon him in a fury, rolled him over on his back, and sat upon him. We three shared a governess who came to us every day in Dublin, but went down to Kerry with us every summer and accompanied us to Limerick when my father became Bishop of the united dioceses of Limerick, Ardfert, and Aghadoe.* I suppose she taught us well, but I can only remember writing copies under her guidance with the tail of my quill pen pointing over my right shoulder and suffering very much when it became necessary to do sums on a little white porcelain slate. My mother was fetched up one day to the schoolroom at the Castle to sit in judgment on my untidy rows of tear-smudged figures which would not come right. She "sided" with Miss Eades; I cried myself into stupefaction and was sent to bed, and to this day I have a hatred of white china slates—and figures.

To reach the Chapel Royal we used to cross the Upper

* Ardfert and Aghadoe were in Kerry. The diocese, roughly speaking, embraced the counties of Limerick and Kerry.

THE UPPER CASTLE YARD

Castle Yard, pass through some of the viceregal apartments and along a curving corridor carpeted with red, and we often played with Armine in the Throne Room swathed in dust-sheets and brown holland. Sometimes we visited Mrs. Richmond, the dignified housekeeper, in her own quarters, and heard from her many a tale of the great folks she had served or seen. When Queen Victoria visited Dublin in 1861 with the Prince Consort, Mrs. Richmond had caused spotless antimacassars of white crochet to be fastened to the back of every sofa and easy-chair in the rooms prepared for them. Five minutes before their arrival a member of their suite rushed breathless into Mrs. Richmond's office to tell her that every antimacassar must be instantly removed, as the Queen detested these "toilet-accessories," invented during a period when hair oil was generally and liberally used. Mrs. Richmond also told us that it was accounted a crime to meet a member of the Royal Family in a passage, and as the passages in Dublin Castle were narrow, and in places tortuous, it was hard to avoid trouble. A story of the Queen told to my father by the then Master of the Horse made a deep impression on me when I was old enough to understand it. When her Majesty drove out in State into the country, the officer commanding the escort rode beside her carriage so that he should take her orders or supply information *chemin faisant*. "Who lives here?" the Queen would ask as the carriage passed some great house or well-kept "demesne," and the officer, more often than not, replied "I don't know, Ma'am." So the Queen

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turned to the sergeant riding on the other side of the carriage, who had the presence of mind to *invent* owners, if he was ignorant of their names, for every place of consequence in which she was interested. The moral pointed by my father when he told this tale was "It is the business of everyone in attendance on Royal personages to supply all the information required by them."

In recognition of his own services as Chaplain during the Queen's visit my father received from her a very beautiful and uncommon ring composed of five large diamonds set in the form of a cross. Inside it was inscribed "*V. R. Carolo Graves dat 1861.*" To us children it was an object of veneration, and we would beg to be allowed to put the Queen's ring on our small fingers as a special indulgence. My father wore it constantly until, as a very old man, not one of his always slender fingers was thick enough to fill it.

CHAPTER III

EARLY TRAINING

WE spent about eight months of each year at the Castle, where our only convenient playground was the Pound, a great round grass plot on which Lord Carlisle, Lord Kimberley's predecessor, used to play croquet, a game introduced during his term of office. There

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were some trees in the Pound and many sooty bushes of lilac and laburnum, and we reached it by a foot-bridge leading from the viceregal apartments and spanning Ship Street. Here we used to meet other "household" children from the Upper Castle Yard, but they were all older than myself, and I was much flattered when two big—enormous, in fact—girls led me aside one day into what we were pleased to call an "arbour" of blackened shrubs and, after bandaging my eyes, put some little lozenges into my mouth. I afterwards found them to be of a yellowish substance called "Bath pipe," and, properly speaking, cough lozenges, and they tasted of liquorice. Next time I met my friends they executed the same mysterious manœuvre, but in the crowning ceremony substituted for the Bath pipe some dirty little pebbles and twigs. I have never quite forgotten this heartless deception, and when I was told some years later that one of these perfidious monsters had married the heir to a dukedom I entertained the gravest doubts of her fitness to adorn the position.

At five I began to develop a passion for dress. It was the age of crinolines, and I longed to possess one, but as my father would not permit the wearing of this monstrous freak of fashion to his wife and elder daughters, I was doomed to disappointment. However, I had a green and white checked silk and a blue and white striped "mohair," and as they were very short and full they stuck out beautifully. About this time my two sisters next above me, Rosy and Lily, had their first bonnets. I can see them still, laid out with their

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE IN THE MAKING

thick winter cloaks and grey kid gloves on their beds before church one cold Sunday morning. They were of coarse slate-grey straw and were trimmed with reddish brown flowers, and they had long grey silk or satin strings. The two girls had just been confirmed, and I fancied the bonnets were in some way connected with the rite of confirmation.

We went to church very regularly, but our Sundays were never made penitential. We were taught from Mrs. Alexander's book of "Hymns for Little Children," published, most fortunately for us, in time to supersede the somewhat heavy hymnology of the previous era. Such jingles as "There is a Happy Land" and "Shall we gather at the River," which became popular about this period, offended my father's taste, and I have never regretted that they were excluded from our repertory. Nor did he approve of such scraps of secular information as were furnished by the "Child's Guide to Knowledge"; the "Swiss Family Robinson" was *tapu*, and the rudimentary but enjoyable music of the Christy Minstrels was anathema. However, we heard the latter sung by our handsome nurserymaid "Saranna," and I, for one, loved "Wait for de Wagon," "I wish I were with Nancy," and "Massa's in de cold, cold ground."

I have since been glad that our parents only gave us the best in prose, poetry, and music. One can always widen one's range so as to embrace what is good of all kinds in all the arts. If one does not start with a high standard, it is hard to accept it later. Such names as Bach, Shakespeare, and Raphael stood for

EARLY TRAINING

something as sacred and as far above our criticism as St. Paul or Queen Victoria.* Among children taught as we were there must always be the danger of adopting a superior tone in intercourse with others less fastidiously trained, and I plead guilty to many of the faults which make the purist (or the prig) so objectionable to the easily pleased. I have a horror of religious clap-trap, of slipshod grammar, and of what a friend of mine calls the *rancid* in music or literature, but I have long since ceased to condemn the explosive evangelical, the slovenly or trivial letter-writer and the singer of comic songs. I know now that neither canting nor ranting need be associated with the first, affection can be expressed by the second, and vulgarity is not essential in the third.

As well as I can remember, the naughtiest thing I did while we lived at the Castle was to hide the piano-tuner's hat, but what my motive was I cannot now say. I bore him no grudge, nor yet was I so attached to him that I wished to delay his departure. I hid it behind the window curtain, and when everyone was questioned I stoutly denied my guilt. But the crime was ultimately traced to me and I was soundly punished.

In a diary kept by my brother Alfred in those early

* What my father would have said had he lived to hear my boy's opinion of a great composer's music at the beginning of this century I do not know. His sense of humour must have been tickled, but he would have been shocked. Roger, then a midshipman, had come back from a Sunday afternoon concert at the Albert Hall, and answered to my inquiry whether he had enjoyed the music, "Some of it was all right, but there was a beastly long thing called *Die*, *Mr. Singer*, by that rotter Wagg-ner that spoilt the whole show."

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days I have found some references to myself as "Tiny," a nickname I should never have recognised as my own. "Tiny sat down on a cabbage leaf full of fine strawberries in the railway carriage" (on our annual journey from Dublin to Parknasilla); and later, "Tiny walked right into the sea at Goleen Rivee to-day" (I must have been about two and a half); "she seems very fond of the water."

Those journeys to Parknasilla and back were desperate undertakings for the seniors of the party. Six boys and girls between nine and nineteen and three babies between six months and three and a half years must have proved a handful for the bravest of parents, nurses, and governesses to control. The railway journey took nearly twelve hours, and, after spending the night at Killarney, we drove thirty miles over the mountains on a long outside car called a "Bianconi" (after its Italian inventor) *if fine*. But if it was wet we were imprisoned in batches of four in the detestable contrivance known as a Cork, or inside, car. This is a black box on two wheels, with two tiny windows high up facing for'ard, a seat (to hold two) on either side running fore and aft, and a pair of black tarpaulin curtains closing in the after-part of the vehicle above the door. The results of a long drive in an inside car are frequently both painful and humiliating to bad sailors. Four friends of ours were once starting for a ball from Cruise's Hotel in Limerick in a Cork car (backed in against the kerb), when that portion of the harness described by an Irish groom-gardener as the "lobelia-band" gave way and the

EARLY TRAINING

passengers were suddenly deposited on the muddy pavement, boxed up in inextricable and agonising confusion. They were rescued by some sympathetic passers-by who, drawing down the skyward-pointing shafts, restored the car to its original position.

Whether we were jolted and jumbled about in inside cars or able to perch on the unprotected seats of a Bianconi, that long drive from Killarney to Parknasilla must have been a trial to us all. First we climbed steadily up past the Lakes and through the exquisite woods to Looscaunagh, where the horses were baited, and then away we went down the curving roads through a wild and treeless region to the sea and to the unparalleled delights of boating and bathing, mountain climbing and fishing that awaited us. There was no lawn tennis then, no golf, no bicycling or motor-ing ; but the days were never long enough, and the unhackneyed beauties of Parknasilla never palled. Everyone above nursery age hailed with joy an expedition, whether to some remote mountain lake where the little brown trout lived or across Kenmare Bay to Sharky Island ; or to the great gloomy caves of Ardgroom when the Atlantic swell allowed us to explore their recesses ; or to Kilmackilloge Harbour or lovely Derreen. And there was Derrynane, the old home of Dan O'Connell, with its shell-strewn beach, seventeen miles away along the western coast ; Waterville, Valencia, and the Skelligs for more ambitious explorers ; and close at hand our own exquisite creeks and shores and wooded islands where silver birches drooped over the water and the heather began

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where the seaweed left off. To our right front lay Garinish, Lord Dunraven's island, to our left the steep bluff of Rossdohan, and up the bay to the eastward were the tall rook-haunted trees, the great walled fruit-garden and the fishpond of Derriquin where lived my well-loved playmates, Altie and Mary Bland. That hilly region of South Kerry between the Reeks and the sea—a region of bogs and heather, stout hollies, tall pines, golden furze and ragweed, and blue loughs—was a paradise of fortunate children who had never seen a bathing-machine or a nigger minstrel. Sea wall, shingle, beach, sands, parade, esplanade and pier were words forming no part of our vocabulary, and were only learnt, and held in slight esteem, when Folkestone, Brighton, Southsea and similar conventional and wholly unsatisfactory seaside settlements forced themselves upon our notice.

CHAPTER IV

DUBLIN PEOPLE

I WAS six years old when my father became Bishop of Limerick, and on the same day his close friend, Dr. Butcher, was consecrated Bishop of Meath. The wits made merry over the names Butcher and Graves, saying that the Crown had given the Protestants of Ireland a Butcher in Meath to kill them and Graves in

DUBLIN PEOPLE

Limerick to bury them. I have no recollection of the Butchers in Dublin, though the sons and eldest daughter were the chosen companions of my elder brothers and sisters when they lived next door to one another in Fitzwilliam Square. They were a most remarkable family of brilliant mental endowments and great originality. Two only of the six are now living—J. G. Butcher, Unionist member for York, and Mrs. George Prothero. All four sisters were fine musicians—Lady Monteagle, Mrs. Prothero, Mrs. Crawley, and Eleanor, the youngest, who died unmarried but not unsought. The elder son Henry, late member for Cambridge University, was for some years Professor of Greek at Edinburgh. He married a daughter of Archbishop Trench of Dublin, a well-known poet and philologist as well as a soundly orthodox pillar of his church. So many stories have been circulated first and last about Archbishop Trench that few can have been left untold, but the following may have escaped. As a new and inexperienced curate he was officiating before a small weekday congregation of almswomen and other *habitués* of his church when the words “ Her sons shall grow up as the young plants and her daughters as the polished corners of the temple ” fell to his share in the psalms. Half-way through it a fervent “ The Lord forbid ! ” shocked and startled him. The ejaculation had proceeded from an old Mrs. *Plant*, whose sons had, without exception, turned out badly !

In the 'sixties wits were plentiful in Dublin, which was a perfect factory of appropriate nicknames. Two

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very big men named Joy, the less large of whom stammered badly, were known as "Exceeding Great Joy" and "Great Joy Unspeakable." Colonel Tenison, of Kilronan, who had a Roman nose and was nearly blind, was nicknamed "Blind Hookey," and his wife, Lady Louisa, whom I remember as a very stout old lady in 1879, was "Unlimited Loo"; their two daughters, co-heiresses, afterwards Lady Dormer and Lady Kingston, were "Chicken Hazard."

I always longed to see a Drawing Room at Dublin Castle, but my wish was never gratified. In old days the Lord Lieutenant kissed every lady presented to him on the cheek, and Lord Carlisle, who valued the viceregal prerogative, used sometimes to pretend that my mother, a very handsome woman, had not been presented and direct one of his staff to bring her up so that he might perform a work of supererogation much to his taste. Lord Carlisle was clean shaven, and Charley thought him very like Prince Bulbo in "The Rose and the Ring" when he wore his broad blue ribbon across the front of his white waistcoat. Lord Spencer, who succeeded Lord Kimberley as Lord Lieutenant, had a long and thick red beard, which used to get so full of pearl powder after he had kissed a few dozen ladies that he had to retire and brush it out before proceeding. Besides, it made him sneeze.

In old days the majority of guests at a Castle ball were of gentle birth and breeding, but in later *régimes* the door was opened to so heterogeneous a crowd that many representatives of noble and ancient families absented themselves from viceregal solemnities and

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festivities. At any period, however, there were wonderful toilettes to be seen and amazing brogues and unconventional manners to be noted at a St. Patrick's ball. An over-zealous mother has been known to run round the ball-room after a daughter all unskilled in the dance crying, "*Shpring* to the Captain, M'ria ; *shpring* now, I tell ye," and on another occasion the mother of a pretty *ingénue* replied to an A.D.C. who besought her daughter's hand in the waltz, " Indeed, then, she cann't be danncing now at all. Amn't I keeping her cool for the Errel of Ranfurrly ? "

PART II

A BISHOP'S DAUGHTER, 1866—1885

CHAPTER V

CHANGES

WE moved to Limerick in the autumn of 1866 after our customary sojourn at Parknasilla, but as the Palace had to undergo a complete refit my father took a furnished house on the Clare side of the Shannon for a few months. I do not think it was a particularly interesting or attractive residence, but it had the charm which all novelty possesses for children, a charm which had not worn off before we moved into our official quarters. The Palace was a spacious and well-built Georgian house with fine lofty rooms, a grand staircase of wide, shallow steps, and a good-sized garden to play in. The garden had originally run down to the river, but on the building of wharves the loss of its muddy shore was compensated for by the erection of a high terrace between red-brick walls. Thence we could see all there was to be seen of such cargo ships (sailing craft or steamers) as came alongside, and we children would perch for hours on the heavy stone coping, watching the loading and unloading, the making fast, and the preparations for departure that went on below us. It was from this terrace that Bishop Higgins of Limerick heard Catherine Hayes, then a young girl of the people, singing down below on the wharf. Recognising

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a jewel, he sought her out and himself defrayed the cost of her musical education. There were ballad singers on the wharf in our day, but no Catherine Hayes, and I remember one the refrain of whose monotonous song ran thus :

*“ Now, Bridget Donoghue,
I’ll tell ye what to do—
Ye’ll change yer name to Pattherson
And I’ll be Donoghue.”*

The reason for the change of name was, for me, shrouded in mystery.

The climate of Limerick was damp, and at spring tides the river used to find its way into our garden, so perhaps it was not surprising that my eldest sister Helen and I both had rheumatic fever during our first winter at the Palace. Still it was in many respects a delightful house, and the fresh paint and papers, the comfortable new furniture, as little ugly as might be in an age of ugly furniture, and, above all things, the corkscrew backstairs (though in the dusk they were full of terrors for me) provided material for satisfaction to irresponsible beings of tender age. Betsy was now known as Mrs. Robinson, the housekeeper, but she was still my dear and indulgent nurse and acted as maid to my mother. I had more new clothes than heretofore, and in a brown velveteen frock piped with blue and a black velveteen piped with scarlet I thought myself a person of fashion and importance. But I was always ailing, and when rheumatic fever was followed by jaundice and jaundice by bronchitis, it

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seemed certain that Limerick did not suit "poor little Ida." Then when the summer came there was no joyful removal to Parknasilla, because the house was in the clinging grip of builders busy with the additions necessary for the accommodation of a family now counting so many grown-up members.

But there was great happiness at the Palace when July brought Jack, the eldest of us all, back from India on leave after seven years in the Indian Civil Service. Never was there a gayer or more beloved brother, and we three adored him. Alas! that summer ended in bitter grief when Jack died, after a short illness, of meningitis. I was far too young to understand all that his loss stood for, but I know now what sorrow it caused my parents, whose love for and pride in him were great, and I can remember how my mother looked when she came out of the room where her eldest-born lay dead. It was my first sight of tragedy, and I ran to Betsy for comfort. "No, darlin', I can't stay with you now," she said, and, weeping, kissed me; "I must go to the mistress."

I do not know when or how the news was broken to me that I was to be sent to school in England. Bob was very ill with scarlet fever after Jack's death, and Betsy, of course, was nursing him when Charley and I were packed off to a dreary seaside place in Clare where there was little to make us forget our troubles. Early in November my father took us over to London; Charley was placed at a preparatory school at Maidenhead and I was taken down to the Misses Z——'s "Establishment for Young Ladies" at Fulham.

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CHAPTER VI

TRANSPLANTED

It was Bishop Tait of London, a good friend of my father's, who had recommended the Misses Z——'s school. Their niece, Miss Y——, a clever and charming woman, was governess to Lucy, Edith, and Agnes Tait, and the school kept by her aunts provided an excellent education under her sister Miss Emma Y——, plus a Spartan training in manners and deportment at the hands of Miss Susan Z——, third of four maiden sisters not content to live upon the memory of better days who had established this school many years before I was born.

Miss Susan must have been sixty ; Miss Elizabeth, next above her in age, gave us religious instruction ; Miss Jane, of unknown antiquity, we rarely saw ; and Miss Rebecca, the youngest, who wore her hair in bunches of ringlets that reminded me of a brown water-spaniel's ears, must, I think, have superintended the housekeeping. Two younger Misses Y——, Miss Frances and Miss Julia, walked out with us, taught and attended to the needs of the junior pupils and maintained order out of school hours.

The teaching was first-rate, but there was a complete absence of comfort and beauty in our surroundings. Our crowded bedrooms were like those in a modern orphanage, our food was, though plentiful, ill served and unpalatable, and we had but one bath per week !

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I am sure that neither the Bishop of London nor Mrs. Tait had any conception of the inadequacy of the domestic arrangements of Bridge House when they recommended the school to my father. To myself, rather petted than otherwise, such conditions were at first almost intolerable.

We had spent some days in London with my mother's sister, Mrs. Wilson Block, and before I bade her good-bye she made me learn, and repeat to her, her address, so that if I was not happy at school or needed anything I should write to her at once. She was as ignorant as her little niece of the custom, then common among schoolmistresses, of censoring all letters going out of the house as well as those coming into it, except from parents. I had no chance of pouring out my woes in ill-spelt, blotted letters. Once a week I wrote a copy (on a slate) of my letter to my parents, and on Sunday I transcribed it on to ruled notepaper under the vigilant eye of a governess. I came across a bundle of these hapless little documents among my father's papers after his death thirty years later. "I am very happy here," they said; "the Misses Z—— are very kind to me. We went for a nice walk to Barnes Common" (or Wimbledon, or along the Bishop's Walk) "yesterday.—I remain, my dear Mamma, Your affectionate little daughter, IDA."

How should my mother have guessed that I was as forlorn and lonesome as a prisoner among girls of a social class with which I had never mixed and with whom I had nothing in common? They were farmers'

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daughters and tradesmen's daughters almost without exception, and every one of them was English. I was an alien and the youngest of them all. There was no Betsy to say " Good-night, darlin', and God bless you " in her dear Lancashire voice, as she " happed " me up cosily in my own little bed. I shared a bed with a strange girl ; my hair was cruelly imprisoned in half-a-dozen stiff curl papers at night ; I dressed on cold winter mornings by the light of a tallow candle in a tin candlestick, and we had long long prayers and a chapter from Miss Elizabeth's own *Commentary on the Pentateuch* before we sat down to thick slices of bread spread with butter that did not come from Cork and tea, ready " milked " and sweetened, from a tin urn with a tap. I was one of an unsympathetic community ; I had chilblains on my fingers and toes, and it seemed to me I had nothing of my very own except my little troubles. One comforter I had—a smiling, rosy-cheeked housemaid named Martha Lloyd. It was she who gave me my weekly bath, and, even if she had been otherwise than kind, her connection with the best moment of the week would have endeared her to me. The event next best in my weekly round was the dancing lesson. I loved dancing, and M. Adrien Delferrier, who taught us, was an artist. He played his little fiddle as he danced ; smiling or grimacing, encouraging or sarcastic, he *chassé'd* and glissaded upon the uneven but slippery boards of the great schoolroom, calling out directions all the while. He was particularly kind to me, recognising, perhaps, in the little black-clad Irish girl a sister *émigrée* in

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uncompromisingly English surroundings, and once—it was, I think, in 1872—he produced from his neat pocket-book a newspaper cutting which announced that Charley had headed the list of junior scholarship winners at Marlborough. I was called up between two dances and made my best curtsy as I thanked the good little man for his kind thought. Curtsyng was part of our daily routine, for we invariably “bobbed” to our elder schoolmistresses, whom we addressed as “Ma’am.” It was a good custom.

My first Christmas holidays brought a respite, and, though I was not to go home, there were friends and relations close at hand who made the holidays a cheerful time. I paid a short visit to the Taits, who were then on the eve of translation to Lambeth, and never have I been in so happy a household. The three girls, of whom Agnes, the youngest, was just my age, were as pretty as pictures, as good as angels, and as merry as grigs; and it seemed easy, and indeed natural, to be good while I was in their company. I was surprised and saddened to find, on leaving Fulham Palace for my aunt’s house in London, that I was quite a naughty and troublesome little girl, rather in the way than otherwise, and ready to fight with my young cousins on the slightest provocation. But it was a bad moment when I bade them good-bye and was restored to the well-regulated and uncongenial atmosphere of school.

My father, who then had a seat in the House of Lords (it was before the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland), came over to London with my mother in

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the following summer, and I spent three happy days with them in their rooms in Sackville Street. I had been cherishing a hope that when I could explain to them fully my reasons for disliking school I should be delivered and restored to my home, but I looked so well, and had learnt so much geography, history, French and arithmetic, that they were perfectly satisfied with their choice of a school, and the complaints of a little girl of nine were not in those days listened to with the attention they would now receive. I was taken to Westminster Abbey on Sunday afternoon, a never-to-be-forgotten experience which lifted me for the time above the ugliness and fret of school life, and after service we went to tea with the Dean and Lady Augusta Stanley, whose dark, plain face was beautiful with kindness and alight with intelligence.

When the summer holidays came, not many weeks later, Charley and Bob (who had joined him at school after Christmas) and I started off for Parknasilla. It was a long and perilous journey for a child of my age, with no more efficient protectors than two small brothers armed with pea-shooters, but nothing dismayed me, not even the rough crossing, and when I found myself once more in Betsy's arms there was not in the whole wide world a happier little girl.

Helen's marriage to Captain Harry Powys, of the 52nd L. I., made my first summer holidays peculiarly exciting. I loved my big brother-in-law already (had he not carried me about in a waste-paper basket the year before in Limerick?), and as a diminutive bridesmaid I enjoyed a social importance that sensibly

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demoralised me. In the wedding group, photographed on the step^o at Parknasilla, I was seated on the best man's* knee. Him I worshipped, for he was as tall and handsome as he was kind and witty, and when he married my own first cousin five years later I experienced such a sense of outrage and loss as only a bride forsaken at the altar should feel.

When I was ten my first nephew, John Powys, was born, and my pride and excitement were great. The 52nd was then at Malta, but six months later in the Christmas holidays Helen brought the baby and a fat Maltese nurse named Gaetana to stay at the Palace. John was unluckily too young to realise that I was his aunt, but I hoped to impress his nurse favourably and become a welcome visitor to the nursery, so I hunted among my treasures, and finding a boxful of coloured shells given me by a little friend, placed it in a conspicuous position with a paper laid beside it bearing the words "*Per Gaetana da Ida.*" It never occurred to Gaetana, who was unable to read, that the shells were an offering to her, and as little John would certainly have put them in his mouth they were "sided" away without acknowledgment, a slight that distressed me considerably.

* James Franklin Bland.

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CHAPTER VII

ALLEVIATIONS AND HUMILIATIONS

THE rigours of term time at Bridge House were mitigated by permission to spend occasional week-ends with friends of my family in or near London and with my brothers Alfred and Arnold. In the winter of 1871 one of these *exeats* was passed with Sir Arthur and Lady Helps in their charming old house on Kew Green. Everyone there was very good to me, but I looked upon the head of the house with particular affection and respect. On Sunday he invited me into his den. "These are my lesson books at present," he said, pointing to the very twins of the German Grammar and dictionary we used at Bridge House. "I am learning German now, but I don't think the people who constructed the language showed much sense in making the sun feminine and the moon masculine. I fear I shall never quite get over it.* . . . And now, what are *your* accomplishments?" "I am afraid I haven't any," I replied with unusual, but genuine, humility, "because, you see, I haven't *finished* learning anything yet"—an answer which seemed to please Sir Arthur.

Another week-end I spent delightfully in the heart-warming circle of George Macdonald's large family at "The Retreat," Hammersmith. The children were

* See p. 3 of "Social Pressure," by Sir Arthur Helps; published 1874.

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all clever and all attractive. On the Saturday evening they acted one of Mrs. Macdonald's little plays in the beautiful old garden where cedars and tulip trees flourished, and earlier in the day we had watched an Anglo-American boatrace from the front windows which looked on to the river. We had cold luncheons and cold suppers, for the weather was very hot, and I returned most unwillingly to the suet puddings *before* meat and the hashed mutton, which I imagined tasted of cockroaches, of Bridge House.

In the following autumn Alfred and Arnold invited me to their lodgings at Wimbledon where they were cramming with Mr. Scoones. They were erratic guardians, kind but reckless, and for the first time in my life I ate as many walnuts as I liked. This deed, which was unattended by disaster, represented to me at the age of eleven the complete freedom of the subject. We breakfasted late next morning, and it was half-past ten before Alfred bethought him that I ought to be taken to church. After consulting his landlady he told me to get dressed at once as the church was some way off. On our way we were caught in a heavy shower, and, abandoning our original design, turned for shelter into a strange place of worship where prayer-books were useless. The clergyman wore no surplice, and the hymns were neither ancient nor modern, but made, we supposed, locally by uninspired persons. It was not a success, and after listening to a long and vehemently delivered sermon we were glad to be released.

Next time I stayed with Alfred he was a clerk in the

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Home Office, with rooms in Bayswater. He took Bob and me to see a play called "Old Soldiers," and we were very happy. We had shopped in the afternoon, and Alfred, who was original and inquisitive where food was concerned, but no gourmet, led us to Covent Garden, whence we carried home strange and disappointing fruits in paper bags—shaddocks and Norfolk biffins!—the names of which had proved fallaciously attractive. On Sunday we walked all the way to Onslow Gardens, where we had tea with Mr. and Mrs. Froude, and by that time I had a blister, set up during the expedition to Covent Garden, on each heel. Mr. Froude was an object of devotion with me, and when we sat in the library at tea I forgot my damaged heels, but I shall never forget the incident which had endeared this delightful writer to me. The Froudes were for two seasons Lord Lansdowne's tenants at Derreen, on Kenmare Bay, and one hot summer day they had brought some of our party back to Parknasilla in their twenty-ton yacht after we had lunched with them. I had been amusing myself towing for mackerel from the deck of the yacht as she glided slowly through the smooth water, and had reluctantly given up my line without having caught a single fish when our dinghy came alongside to take us ashore. We transhipped, and the yacht had just gone about and was heading for home when Mr. Froude hailed us and putting the tiller hard over brought her round again. "Hold on," he cried; "Ida's line has caught a fish, so it must be hers." The fish, a good-sized pollock, was unhooked and thrown into our boat, and

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very pleased and proud was Ida. Later when grown-up people asserted in my hearing that Mr. Froude could not be counted a great historian and called his works inaccurate or misleading I used to burn with indignation and long to tell them how kind he had been about the pollock.

It was more than unlucky, it was terrible, that Alfred should have taken me back to Bridge House on top of an omnibus the day after our visit to the Froudes. Some spy perceived me from the window and reported to Miss Susan that I, a "young lady" of eleven or twelve, had been seen seated on the "knifeboard" (there were no "garden-seats" in those days) of a Putney Bridge omnibus, whence I had presently descended with reckless inelegance by the steep unshrouded ladder! Miss Susan made Alfred a painful scene in consequence. It was a scandal, a disgrace in which the whole establishment was involved; and Alfred slunk away in deep humiliation, leaving me to bear as best I might Miss Susan's crushing comments on this act of unpardonable indecorum. It was hard on poor Alfred, who had devoted his week-end to entertaining Bob and me, but at the time I felt he was far more fortunate than myself.

Alfred was now and then inspired to perform deeds more strange and daring than the purchase of unknown fruits. On one memorable occasion when he was invited to come in after dinner and spend the evening at my aunt's house in Talbot Square, he arrived, contrary to his wont, considerably before the hour

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named to find himself alone in the drawing-room. It was a warm night ; the square was still dining, and every balcony was deserted. Now Talbot Square has but three sides to it and is a *cul-de-sac*, and the idea of leaping the low balustrades dividing each balcony from its neighbours appealed irresistibly to Alfred, so he pranced the whole way round from No. 15 to the end furthest removed therefrom, gave a wild *coo-ee* ! on arriving at that point and bounded back again. Nothing occurred to mar the success of this most enjoyable escapade, and unless some startled housemaid "straightening" a drawing-room perceived his flying form and heard his *coo-ee* not one single inhabitant of that decorous collection of stucco-faced houses noted my brother's crazy progress.

I passed the Easter holidays of 1872 at Addington Vicarage, close to Addington Park, then the country residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This gave me an opportunity of continuing my acquaintance with Archbishop Tait's daughters which had begun three years earlier at Fulham. From the whole family I met with great kindness, but two painful incidents connected with a short visit I paid them at Addington Park will ever remain in my memory.

On Sunday morning each of us repeated a hymn of our own choosing to the Archbishop. Mine was "Art thou weary? art thou languid?" and I made, from sheer carelessness I fear, a terrible blunder, substituting *foot-prints* for *wound-prints* in the line "In His hands and feet are wound-prints." The Archbishop corrected me gently, but I was unspeakably

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ashamed of myself. Later on, as we were leaving the house for a walk, he dropped his glove, and before I thought of darting forward to pick it up he had gone painfully down on one knee to do so. It was one of the irretrievable opportunities one does not cease to regret.

Yet another, but merely absurd, recollection belongs to those holidays at Addington. With two of the little Benhams from the vicarage I had set off one mild April morning to pick primroses in the neighbouring copses. The grass was long and wet under the bushes, and I wore goloshes, but when we emerged, hot and tired, into the adjoining fields I removed my goloshes, which were clumsy things a size too large, and carried them in my hand. Then a magnificently steep grassy slope tempted me to roll down it, and tying my troublesome goloshes together with my waistband I hung them round my neck so that I should roll freely and enjoyably. The rolling was not a complete success, for there were aggravating molehills, soft yet lumpy, which impeded my descent, and I arrived very crumpled, earthy and breathless at the bottom of the field to hear the kind voice of the Archbishop calling me by name! A wagonette containing the entire family was drawn up on the road a few feet from the spot where my roll had ended, and I was invited to take the one vacant place and return in this good company to Addington Park. Confused and abashed, with my goloshes dangling from my neck, I accepted and crept past the tall footman who held the door open feeling myself a disgrace to my up-bringing. But the good

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feeling of every member of the party helped me to forget my dishevelled condition, and before I returned to the vicarage I was restored to comparative tidiness and had regained something of my self-respect. Anyone short of an archangel must have laughed.

When my father came over to London he would take me out with him for an afternoon, or even a whole day, and we would go shopping or paying calls together. Once we went to tea at the Theodore Martins', and I gazed with something like awe at the agreeable and vivacious elderly lady who as Helen Faucit had been the greatest actress of her day.

As I grew older and arrived at the awkward age I became conscious of my hands and feet and of the ugly clothes which the "management" at Bridge House purchased for me, and when my father took me down with him to Kenry House at Combe Wood to see Lady Dunraven* one hot summer day I was so warmly and unbecomingly clad that I suffered agonies of humiliation. As I clumped and creaked in my father's wake across endless acres of floor in the cool and dimly-lighted drawing-rooms I felt like a baby hippopotamus in an aviary, and my voice sounded loud and hoarse when I replied to the greeting of my hostess, exquisitely dressed and slender to fragility. My dress was of sand-coloured stuff, peppered with red and green blobs and trimmed with flat "crossway" bands of the same material piped with ugly green silk; my sand-coloured hat was as hideous as my dress, and my stockings, of which

* Died 1916.

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perhaps two inches showed above my thick black boots, were white ! I have often thought how cruel it was to make such a guy of a child of twelve. If only the Miss Z——s had guessed how self-conscious and awkward their choice of colours, fashions and materials made me, they might have taken more trouble with my wardrobe. But it was in an age when many women, otherwise kind-hearted, considered it right to discourage vanity by every means in their power, not realising that a child suitably and becomingly dressed—not “dressed-up”—is both comfortable and unself-conscious.

CHAPTER VIII

HOLIDAY MEMORIES

IT must have been in 1871 that we had “Charley” Stanford (now Sir C. V. Stanford) and his great, tall, witty father with the magnificent bass voice staying with us at the Palace during the Christmas holidays. Mr. Stanford was Rosy’s godfather, and my father stood in the same relation to Mr. Stanford’s only son. Godparents were, I think, more important in our young days than they are now, and friendships were drawn closer by the existence of the sponsor’s tie. In Sir Charles’ delightful book of reminiscences (“Pages from an Unwritten Diary”) he refers to the theatrical

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entertainment called "The I.O.U. Indians," which, devised by Alfred, was embellished by music written for the occasion by Sir Charles himself, then a Cambridge undergraduate. It was very clever music, highly descriptive, and the march of cannibals was appropriately queer and grisly. In order to include me in the cast a female cannibal named Zylobalsamum was introduced, and, clad in a white muslin frock with blue ribbons, I must have been an extravagantly incongruous figure. We all wore tails—for we were but little higher than monkeys—and in one scene when it should have been an important accessory mine was missing, so in the marriage ceremony between Ozokerit and Zylobalsamum a piece of my skirt had to be tied to Alfred's tail of heavy brown rope.

There were tableaux afterwards, and as Bluebeard's wife I wore a white moiré evening-gown with narrow cerise stripes belonging to Rosy. Charley (Graves), who was Bluebeard, was in a wicked mood that night, and clutched my hair (preparatory to cutting my head off) with such realistic force that I could have screamed. But after I was released my joy in wearing a real evening-gown *with a train* made me forget the passing agony, and I was seated among the spectators, secure of looking grown-up for the rest of the evening, when the stage-manager called me away. Charley, dressed as the Friar in "Romeo and Juliet," was actually standing at the top of the steps leading down to Juliet's tomb when, being seized with an attack of hiccoughs, he bounded off his perch and fled. He was

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pursued, divested of his cowled habit and set free, while I, hastily stripped of my ball-gown, was thrust into the brown fustian and obliged to stand at the top of the steps in distracting consciousness of my white kid shoes, which would not be hidden. I do not suppose a soul noticed them—Rosy made so lovely a Juliet that the Friar might have worn a harlequin's spangles without disturbing the audience—but I was miserable, and, besides, I had been bereft of my beautiful grown-up gown. Not Charley himself, embittered, embarrassed and in hiding, can have been more disconsolate than I.

Next day we were both cross, and I hurled a large empty biscuit-tin, in which red-fire had been burnt the night before, down a whole flight of stairs at Charley's head. Fortunately it did not hit him, but he looked up at me with a cold glare in his blue eyes and said, "You little devil!" This outburst scandalised me at the moment, but I felt afterwards that I had been at least as wicked as my brother. Indeed, I was far from being a good child, and I cannot but think that my elders must have been glad when the end of the holidays arrived. But I was devoted to Rosy. Her lovely contralto voice, her high spirits and piquant face—no one ever had a prettier little nose—commanded my admiration, and I was much, and, I fear, inconveniently interested in the young men who worshipped at her shrine.

It was, I think, in August, 1872, that Rosy painted the steward's pig green. Johnson was a dour Northerner, curt in speech and very unpopular both at

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Parknasilla and in the neighbourhood. How it came about that we had a Protestant steward I cannot say. Theoretically it would appear proper that a Protestant bishop should employ only Protestant servants, but in practice such an arrangement is likely to cause trouble in a Catholic province. Johnson was a stern father, and when Rosy heard that he had beaten his little Annie, a pretty fair-haired child of about the same age as myself, for some fault her warm heart and quick temper dictated instant reprisals.

Johnson rented a plot of ground about half a mile away on the high-road to Sneem, and there, in a derelict cottage, he kept a pig. With her friend Ada Vandeleur (later Mrs. Wilton Alhusen) as confederate Rosy plotted a revenge, and gladly abetted by Murty Shea, "No. 1 to the steward," the two girls stole forth after dark, entered the pig's villa residence and painted the animal pea-green in stripes.

Next day was Sunday, and as all the good folk on their way to chapel at Sneem came along the road their eyes were caught by a boldly-printed placard exposed on the pig's house-wall :

" THIS WAY TO THE GREEN PIG. ADMISSION
FREE."

Many must have been late for Mass, but they had enjoyed a treat well worth a small penance, since Johnson was universally disliked. When he and his family came by, churchward-bound, the pig was holding

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a *levée*, and his owner, not unnaturally, was extremely wrathful. Rosy and her friend rejoiced to hear how successful their practical joke had been and that Johnson had looked as black as thunder and used violent language to the pig's visitors, but they had a shock next day when the doctor spending the summer at Parknasilla on account of my mother's precarious health was served with a summons to appear before the nearest bench of magistrates on the charge of having feloniously entered Johnson's premises and ill-treated his pig. Mercifully, Dr Kidd was able to prove an *alibi*, but it was some time before the two girls, whom almost anyone in the neighbourhood could have given away, were easy in their minds. It was never ascertained whether Johnson modified his methods of punishing his little daughter or not, but I fear his temper deteriorated steadily after the incident of the Green Pig, and before long he left my father's service.

CHAPTER IX

A LITTLE GIRL IN ITALY

I HAD been five years at Bridge House when my parents decided to remove me. My mother's health, sadly failing for several years, had become so bad that

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she was in 1873 a complete invalid, and I imagine it was to please her that I was brought home and established under the care of a governess. My people were staying at Blarney, county Cork, where they had taken a cottage in the grounds of the well-known hydropathic institution founded by Dr. Barter at St. Anne's Hill. Neither doctor's treatment nor change of air availed anything in my mother's case, and she died at Shannon Cottage in November of the same year.

A complete change of scene was found necessary for my father, whose own health had been impaired by his long anxiety, and directly after Christmas he took my two sisters, myself and my governess abroad for six months. It was obviously necessary that I should have a governess to keep me in order, but with a precocious taste for society I greatly disliked being habitually relegated to the care of Miss L——, an amiable young woman enough, but sadly uninteresting to me. In spite of this handicap, I took great pleasure in my travels. The sunshine and colour, the variety and novelty of the French Riviera delighted me, but Italy became in 1874, and has ever remained for me, a land of enchantment. From Nice we went to Genoa, from Genoa to Sestri Levante, and driving thence in a seven-horsed *vettura* through the gorges and over the heath-clad hills we reached Spezia, not then a great naval base, but a mere fishing village with exquisite surroundings. From Spezia we pursued our way *viâ* Pisa to Rome and settled down for two months in a shabby old *palazzo*—Palazzo Falzacappa—within a

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few yards of the clanging bells of San Carlo in Corso. Those were glorious months, marred only to my youthful mind by visits to crypts, catacombs, churches, and archæologists' burrowings in the Campagna. It was the picturesque antiquity of the city itself, still unspoilt by trams and other modern advantages and little vulgarised by the incursions of excursionists, that captivated my fancy. The cypresses of the Pincio, the steps of the Trinità de' Monti, delightfully encumbered with artists' models and flower-sellers' baskets overflowing with colour; the glorious gardens of the Villa Pamfili-Doria; the banksian roses shrouding the walls and perfuming the whole environment of the Rospigliosi Palace; the waters of the Tiber running grey and silver past the Castle of S. Angelo—all these made an appeal to me at the age of fourteen that no excavations, no sacred pictures, no statue save the Dying Gladiator, no church except St. Peter's, whose spaciousness pleased me, could rival. We used to drive out almost daily past the Coliseum and through the Arch of Titus into the flower-jewelled Campagna, and the sight of the tender green of April verdure contrasting with the hoary grey of age-old stone or the faded rose of antique brickwork touched me in a spot which has vibrated ever since to this mingling of youth eternally renewed in Nature with the great man-made monuments of the past. After Rome came Perugia, seated at sunset like a burnished crown on a cushion of purple and green; and after Perugia Florence, where we soon accommodated ourselves to what appeared at first frivolous and modern surroundings.

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Again it was the general feeling and aspect of things that charmed me ; the blue skies cut by solemn spires of cypress or seen through a tracery of olive boughs, the dignified grey palaces, the eye-filling Duomo and Battisteria, and the swiftly flowing Arno. I cannot deny that the little booths of the Ponte Vecchio, displaying as they did pretty trifles within the reach of modest buyers like myself, drew me like a magnet ; but perhaps the most pleasing of my many memories connected with those hot weeks of May and early June in Florence is that of the resonant singing of *stornelli* by a party of serenaders in the cool darkness of the narrow stone-paved street upon which the windows of our rooms looked out.

By way of Bologna we went on to Venice, a dream of delight in which gondolas and guitars, mosaics, ripe cherries, bathing at Lido, and eating ices under the coloured awnings of the Piazza San Marco jostled one another. I was probably neither more nor less greedy than other creatures of my age, but it seems a pity that eating and drinking should fill so many niches in my early recollections. The cherries and the ices certainly stand out as boldly in my memory as do the Lions of S. Mark and the white cupola of Santa Maria della Salute.

A night at Verona broke our journey to Milan, where I spent more time gazing into the shop windows of the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele than I devoted to admiring the ornate and dazzling whiteness of the Duomo. From Milan we went to Bellaggio, to Lugano and Stresa, and I must have bored my elders to

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distraction by my parrot-cries of "How lovely!" and "Oh, *do* look!" as the beauties of those wonderful Italian lakes unfolded themselves before my eyes. We drove over the Simplon—the railway was not then completed—passing the night at Iselle by the rushing stream which provided the trout we ate at breakfast before we began the descent to Visp. That crossing of the Simplon was really very fine and thrilling, but we had left Italy, and from that time forward my ready superlatives were reduced to unfavourable comparisons, while my disappointment with the Rhine was positive and freely expressed. Its rudimentary, not to say childish, scenery presented nothing more interesting than a succession of humpy hills with castles on them set on either side of a rather colourless river. I was more than disappointed; I was disgusted. Cologne Cathedral awakened some enthusiasm, and Antwerp, so unlike anything I had ever seen, pleased me greatly; but I had been in Italy in April, May, and June, and the last week of our tour was something of an anti-climax.

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CHAPTER X

HIGHFIELD

WE arrived at Parknasilla in time for the boys' summer holidays. Miss L—— had left us in London, where I learnt that I was to go to a new school in September and there remain until my education was "completed." Meanwhile a French holiday governess of surpassing ability was to take charge of me and brush up all that had been neglected or forgotten during the previous year. She was a Tartar, that governess, and to my delight the entire household trembled before her. Although I was, of course, her obvious and habitual scapegoat, Bob, who studied French with her, suffered considerably. When I went to school in mid-September Mademoiselle refused to budge, asserting, quite unjustifiably I believe, that she had been engaged for three months. She completed that period will he nill he and made every soul at Parknasilla uncomfortable by her tyranny and ill-temper. I, safe, happy, and contented at Highfield, could not but smile over the letters from home telling what a burden and thorn in the flesh they were finding Mademoiselle de C——, and when she finally departed Betsy rang every bell in the house as an expression of the joy which filled all hearts.

My three years at the Miss Metcalfes' great school near Hendon were agreeably uneventful. We were well treated in every respect, and, generally speaking,

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well taught ; but, oddly enough, the standard in languages was not so high as that at Bridge House, although we enjoyed the services of several resident foreign governesses both kind and attractive. One German governess of whom we were all fond was studying English in her spare time, and would bring her exercises and compositions for correction to the study where we Upper-Sixth girls worked or shirked. Led astray by a too copiously furnished dictionary, Fräulein Heidsick made some delightful "howlers," and I remember how the whole room rocked with laughter when the vanity of a little girl showing off her new frock was thus described : " So she leered at her fine clothes and straddled down the street."

My own half-hearted attempts to construe Vergil in the holidays used to amuse Charley—my temporary preceptor—and I fear he derived more pleasure from my translation of the words *insonnitque flagello* (*he tuned up on the flageolet*) than was proper in an instructor. But I think I surpassed myself some years later when I made of H.M.S. *Vernon's* punning motto (*Ver non semper viret*) *A worm does not always turn.*

Socially speaking, we were literally a community of " young ladies " at Highfield, but the Miss Metcalfes, unlike the Miss Z——s, called us, I am glad to chronicle, *girls*. Every appointment of the house was comfortable and refined ; we played lawn tennis, and patches of garden in which we sowed seeds and planted rose bushes were allotted to those amongst us who had a turn for horticulture. " Thena " Clough,* now Vice-

* Daughter of the poet, Arthur Hugh Clough.

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Principal of Newnham, was a schoolfellow of mine, a dark-haired fairy with dancing eyes, and there were two Garrett-Smiths and two Jex-Blakes and the younger daughters of Bishop Butcher of Meath. Mr. Franklin Taylor was our professor for the piano-forte, and he had some pupils who did him great credit, notably Augusta and Eleanor Butcher. I was not one of these, but he taught me not to thump.

I was sometimes naughty and troublesome, sometimes good and hardworking, and when I left I found myself at the top of the school bracketed with a friend far better deserving the distinction—had it been gained by good work alone—than I. But I had a fatal facility and remarkable luck in examinations, so I carried away as the trophy due to my eminence six fat volumes of Schiller which I have never yet read! I had a constitutional, but not hereditary, distaste for the German language. Its gutturals displeased, its grammar maddened me; and, though I have had good German friends, certain national characteristics, as exemplified in most of the Germans I have met, have always repelled me. The total absence of what the French call *le charme* so noticeable in the race is depressing, and the mingling of stuffiness with sentiment, rich pastry with poetry, and philosophy with pettiness I find intolerable. What Octave Feuillet called making "*soupe de myosotis*" describes perfectly the habit of mind of that sentimental cook-housekeeper, the plump Teutonic *Charlotte*. Her large blue eyes might be dimmed by tears, but her appetite for every form of pig-meat would be undiminished. And what can be

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said for a people using the words "*Ich liebe dich*" to confess the tender passion? Such unlovely monosyllables would convey to an unlettered Maori an unpleasant, even disgusting, impression.

CHAPTER XI

GROWN UP

My brother Alfred married,* not long after I went to Highfield, the eldest of a family famous for their beauty and intelligence. There were no less than ten Miss Coopers of Cooper Hill, five miles from Limerick, and their blue eyes and black lashes, roseleaf complexions, and masses of fair hair would have made every one of them a county toast had they lived half a century earlier.

The next marriage in the family was that of my sister Rosy, which occurred just before I left Highfield for good, and as the wedding took place in London I was able to be one of the bridesmaids. Her husband, Massie Blomfield, who had just left the Navy as a captain, was a nephew of Bishop Blomfield of London, and as my sister Helen had married a son of the then Bishop of Sodor and Man our episcopal connections were on the increase. It remained for me to complete the triad by my own marriage with one who counted no less than three Bishops of Salisbury among his

* His first wife died in 1886. Five years later he married Amy, daughter of Heinrich, Ritter von Ranke, of Munich.

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ancestors. Rosy's wedding was a very interesting event. My new brother-in-law's sea-blue eyes and engaging manners instantly endeared him to me, and his qualities on better acquaintance proved fully proportionate to his charms.

I now found myself not only grown up, but the second, instead of the third, daughter at home, and as soon as we were established for the months of *villeggiatura* at Parknasilla I found that my father had decided to give me some work to do as occasional secretary. The Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland by Mr. Gladstone was coupled with its disendowment, and although my father's original income was secured to him for life his responsibilities towards a church despoiled of its revenues were vastly increased. A Church Sustentation Fund had to be established for the payment of clergy appointed after the break, cathedrals and parish churches were now dependent for repairs and upkeep upon voluntary contributions, and it had been necessary for my father to dispense with the services of his private chaplain. So when I came home for good I was taught to file and docket papers, prepare formal letters for my father to sign, and to write distinctly and carefully those he dictated. It was a wholesome discipline at a time when my head was full of girlish anticipations of gaiety, but I must confess that I was not at seventeen at all interested in diocesan matters. Still, I have never regretted my father's training in epistolary punctilio.

Now and then something interesting or amusing to me would be found among the number of appeals,

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complaints, and hard cases which littered the study tables, but as a rule I fear I performed my daily duty without zest. One incident is worth recording. A very indignant bagman writing from the neighbouring diocese of Cork called my father's attention to a "scandalous" infraction of the canons of the Church of Ireland which had caused him "the deepest pain." He had chanced to be present at a harvest thanksgiving service at, I think, Cahirciveen, county Kerry, when the decorations included a cross of white flowers at the east end of the church. This simple cross was in the bagman's eyes the Mark of the Beast, a sign of sympathy with Rome, a Papist emblem, etc., etc., etc.

"Write," said my father shortly. I wrote:—

"SIR,

"I can only regard your letter of the — instant as a symptom of acute *staurophobia*.

"Yours faithfully —,

"Now you can tear it up," said my father, after signing his name; "the wretched fellow wouldn't know the meaning of the word "*staurophobia*," which, as a matter of fact, I have just coined myself! It means hatred of the cross. Put his letter in the fire."

I often wrote with one eye on the clock, longing for the release at noon which signified "All hands to bathe," and bathing at Parknasilla was a prime pleasure, for we were all taught to swim at the earliest possible moment, and I well remember taking my header and swimming across the creek where we generally bathed before I was seven years old. I

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hated the header, but it was an incident paternally insisted upon in an otherwise delightful operation, and non-swimming visitors and neighbours would come to watch the Graves family disporting itself in the water as a sight worth seeing. Fully dressed in old clothes, boots and all, we would sometimes plunge into the sea, and I remember how cross one of my brothers was because I refused on one occasion to go to the bottom and wait there till he dived for and "rescued" me. Good swimmers as we all were, we could not rival the three daughters of Lord Cloncurry, Emily,* Rose, and Mary Lawless, who rented Garinish Island from Lord Dunraven one summer. They were mermaids, no less. I have seen fine diving and swimming in various parts of the world, especially in Sydney Harbour, but for strength, grace, and absolute confidence in the watery element I have never met the equals of the Lawlesses.

We were all very fond of part-singing in those days, and, though not one of my four brothers could furnish a genuine bass, Bob's baritone was frequently pressed into the service, and my father, a skilled musician whose light tenor voice had been unluckily hurt beyond mending by an accident to his throat, could murmur any male part which was lacking. Arnold had a superlatively pure tenor, Lily's soprano was powerful and well trained, and I had a useful mezzo, while Charley's tuneful tenor was a valuable asset. Indoors or out we would sing by heart and unaccompanied,

* Author of "Hurrish," "Grania," "With Essex in Ireland," etc., etc.

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and often beguiled our homeward voyage from the other side of the bay with music. One summer evening, as we were singing Pinsuti's "In this Hour of Softened Splendour," two susceptible seals flopped off a rock in Kilmackilloge Harbour and followed the boat for a mile or more while we encored the tuneful numbers for their benefit. It was funny singing an impassioned serenade to two seals.

Our open-air music was not always unaccompanied. We had a queer little portable harmonium, a *harmonina* I think it was called, upon which I remember Sir Charles Stanford playing with extraordinary skill. It had a range of about four octaves, and had to be held on the performer's knee and *pinched* in its bellows by himself or some helpful acolyte. We serenaded someone—I cannot think whom—one moonlight night, and Sir Charles did wonders with the "Baby," as we used to call it, in the rather elaborate music of "Der Freischütz."

CHAPTER XII

“OUT”

It was near Christmas when we left Parknasilla in 1877, and my hopes as regarded plenty of dancing at Limerick were not disappointed. I made my *début* at a really big and beautiful ball given by Lady Louisa FitzGibbon at Mount Shannon. Liddell's celebrated

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band came down from Dublin to play, and we danced till four or five next morning. All my sister's friends and my own somewhat immature playmates conspired to fill my programme to overflowing, and, much as I enjoyed the ball, I had a sneaking regret, unexpressed of course, that I had only danced once with each of my partners. It seemed such a bewildering patchwork of strange faces and varied "steps," and not quite what heroines of the three-volume novel would have approved. I am sure that one dance with me was quite enough for each partner, for I was unaccommodating through inexperience and inclined to count one, two, three, as I revolved in the waltz. Quite six months later at Commem. I discovered my deficiencies and mended my ways. Undergraduates would never have opened my eyes, since they just trampled joyously round their partners as they pursued an erratic course ; but I fell into the hands of a Mr. Mackenzie, of riper years than the rest, who suddenly awoke in me the knowledge that waltzing was not a mere exercise, but a sublimely fascinating motion borrowed from the planets and perfected by a limited number of human beings. I regret that I never again met the young man to whom I owe so much. All unconscious of my gratitude, amounting with the compound interest of thirty-eight years to something quite incalculable, he still, I hope, walks, and lightly walks, this earth, though his dancing days, like mine, must be over.

Notwithstanding my shortcomings as a waltzer, the winter and spring of 1878 had passed merrily at

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Limerick, and we had spent six weeks in London before going to Oxford for Commem. There Charley was at Christ Church, and Helen, with her husband (who was at his regimental dépôt) and two children, lived in a little house in Iffley Road where we stayed for a broilingly hot but memorable week.

We went by river to Nuneham, we lunched with Charley and his friends at their rooms, we saw the sights and went to garden parties and balls. Oscar Wilde had won the Newdigate that year and was becoming a celebrity. He was introduced to Lily, who thought him very silly and affected when he described his idea of what a dinner-party should be—“very little to eat, very little light, and a great many flowers.” We have now less solid food to eat, less light, and more flowers at dinner-parties than in 1878, and I am sure that if Oscar Wilde had looked less queer—he wore a tall white hat on the back of his head and was greenly pale of face—and had been less of a *poseur* my sister would have been inclined to agree with his views.

To the ball at University College we were chaperoned by Mrs. Humphry Ward, but, occupied as we were in dancing every dance, it was impossible for us to do more than appreciate her kindness in taking us under her wing. Mrs. Ward was not then the celebrated novelist she has since become, or I should have realised how greatly favoured we were to find ourselves in her company. After our third and last ball (Christ Church) the cab ordered to bring us home failed to appear, and at five a.m. of a brilliant June day we walked, foot-sore but still full of life, all the way back from the

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Corn Market to Iffley Road. With us came Charley and a party of giddy and agreeable undergraduates, many of whom would otherwise most certainly have been implicated in a shocking deed committed that morning by some of their friends. These crazy youths found an unattended fire-escape in the street, and pushed, pulled, or rode it down the High, where by misadventure it charged into the windows of the Clarendon Press. One of my late partners was involved, and I heard to my regret that he was fined five pounds. As he had confided to me not an hour before that he had but six pounds to spend during the Long Vacation I often wondered how he managed to struggle through those three lean months.

CHAPTER XIII

PARKNASILLA

WHILE I was still quite happy and heartwhole I was surprised by a proposal of marriage. People may say what they will about girls being invariably and instinctively prepared for such an event : I know it was not so in my case. My *prétendant* was a very nice fellow, but I had no inkling that he regarded me with special affection, so I was surprised as well as annoyed when Helen, who was staying with us at Parknasilla, woke me up one morning to say she had promised

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Mr. X—— that she would arrange an interview between him and me before he left us later in the day after a fortnight's visit. It was raining heavily after breakfast, but Helen firmly carried us off to a spot known as "The Knoll," whence a wide view of sea and sky afforded an opportunity for diagnosing the weather. There she deliberately abandoned us on the pretext that her children's lessons must be attended to. It was a horrid moment. I was wet, cross, ungracious, even brutal, when my companion made his declaration, and before we had reached the seashore I actually took to my heels and ran home by a short cut past the stables, leaving my suitor to follow when and how he pleased.

The story would not be worth telling but for its sequel. Five years later my father, who had also been in the young man's confidence, received a letter which puzzled him extremely. We were sitting at breakfast at the Palace when the post arrived, and after reading the letter he handed it to Lily. "Who in the world is Y. X.?" he asked; "and what in the world does he mean?" Lily read the letter aloud, and I, alone of the three of us, comprehended the full significance of the writer's words. It was indeed my old suitor who wrote announcing his engagement "to the best of women, one who would make an ideal wife for a parson," and thanking my father very warmly for the great kindness he had shown him "five years ago under very trying circumstances." My father had completely forgotten the man and the circumstances; Lily remembered the man, but had never known the circumstances! I

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greatly longed to write and say that I too was engaged and hoped shortly to become the happy, if not ideal, wife of a sailor ; but this satisfaction was denied me, for my engagement was then, in the eyes of my family, non-existent.

For several years the Blands, our nearest neighbours in Kerry, had let their place and lived in England, and great was my pleasure when they returned in 1878 to Derriquin. No one ever had better comrades than I found in the youngest pair of girls. There was a fund of original humour in the family character combined with the gentlest and most courteous manners, and I cannot now recollect anything approaching a quarrel between us at any period of a friendship which had started in the nursery. Their parents held somewhat rigid views on certain subjects, and they were never allowed to go to theatres or taught to dance, but on the other hand they were permitted to paddle, an indulgence forbidden to, but ardently desired by, myself, so until they grew up and pined to go to balls as I did they had the best of it. We three girls, of whom I was the eldest, would have spent every hour of the day in one another's company had this been possible, and even when we were all grown up we used to play childish games together. We made ourselves "houses" in the woods, or even among a hooker-load of slates on Derriquin Quay, and carried on serious conversations relating to the management of servants and children when we called upon one another which generally ended in fits of disabling laughter. We used to race boats made of flag leaves on the mill-

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stream and drive Mrs. Bland's flock of turkeys to distraction by mimicking them. "A, B, C, D" (in a rising scale of squeaks) followed by "plee-yop, plee-yop, plee-yop" (a sixth below) was our formula, and it was astonishingly like the cry of these dowdy and uninteresting birds.

Altie Bland is now Mrs. Wanless O'Gowan, wife of a notable General, and Mary, who was engaged before she put her hair up, has lately reigned in Cairo as the consort of the High Commissioner, Sir Henry McMahon; but neither of them has lost the grace and humour which so distinguished them in their girlhood.

In July, August, and September, we always had plenty of guests at Parknasilla. "Expeditions" were less frequent as my father, who led them, grew older, but lawn-tennis flourished, and our everyday intercourse with our neighbours was never disturbed by serious differences of opinion. A holiday spirit prevailed during the summer months, and when the days grew short and the country emptied of sons on leave or vacation it was time for our return to Limerick. In my day there were more boys than girls in the neighbourhood. Our old friends, Colonel and Mrs. Hartley, at Reenaferra had three sons and one daughter, and there were four sons and one daughter at Rossdohan, the children of Mr. Heard and his beautiful Australian wife. At Rossdohan, in the shelter of a high sandy bluff, a garden of flowering shrubs and rock plants has been conjured out of a tract of stone, heather and bog, and plantations of

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trees, hardy or rare, made that now add shelter and dignity to a landscape already full of charm. Derriquin has long ago changed hands, and at Parknasilla there is a much advertised hôtel. The old house remains, but a pretentious building erected by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, to whom my father sold the place some years before his death, disfigures the shore at Goleen Rivee, where I walked into the sea at the age of two and a half.

These summers at Parknasilla were in many respects unlike any others of my life. There were no accidental strangers in the neighbourhood beyond our own or our friends' guests, for there was no habitable hôtel nearer than old Dromore on the Blackwater, six miles to the eastward, where a few fishing people could be put up; and on the west Waterville, twenty-four miles away, provided accommodation in its small hôtel for as many more. We were thirty miles from Killarney—our railway station—and our weekly supply of groceries came fifteen miles by cart from Kenmare. We killed and ate our own excellent mutton—small and sweet; our fisherman netted a great variety of excellent fish from plaice to turbot, pollock to red gurnet, in addition to what we caught ourselves on a line; our supply of lobsters was unlimited, and from Mr. Bland's beds in the estuary of the Sneem river we got first-rate oysters, while salmon from his bag-net (now abolished) further helped out our bill of fare. Beef was the hardest thing to get, but I do not suppose anyone but the cook minded that. Chickens of a miniature breed we raised

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or bought by the dozen. Six of these fitted easily on an ordinary dish and were generally tender enough to carve with a spoon. Many years ago an English tourist thought he had discovered a gold mine when he found that chickens in South Kerry could be had for sixpence a *couple* (they were a shilling a couple in my young days), so he bought a few hundreds to fatten ; but you could as easily turn a Kerry chicken into a fine, fat English fowl as you could make a dray horse out of a Shetland pony by stuffing him with corn. Our own Kerry cows, miniatures like the chickens, produced the best and creamiest milk in the world ; our tiny hens and those of the cottagers in the district provided eggs ; potatoes were good and plentiful, and the kitchen garden nobly stood the strain imposed upon its peas and beans, globe artichokes of special excellence and other less distinguished vegetables, by a large and hungry household. Except in the matter of groceries and beef we were practically self-supporting, and no food has ever tasted better to me than the fresh and ample produce of Parknasilla and its famous home-made bread. As in most Irish households, there was a casualness in the conduct of the domestic staff. Makeshift kitchenmaids and under-housemaids locally procured were sometimes about as well adapted for service as mountain goats. They quickly learnt those of their duties which appealed to them and forgot or ignored the rest ; but they were generally cheerful and friendly and invariably rose to any emergency.

Old Fanny Sullivan, who looked after the poultry

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and milked the cows, was Betsy's devoted slave. She was not quite right in her head, but her heart beat warmly for us all. Married at fifteen, she had lost her husband by drowning before she was sixteen and had been childish ever since ; but she was an institution, and until the day of her death, after more than thirty years in my father's service, she worked with the simple ardour and perfect faithfulness to which few of her superiors in mental power could lay claim. Fanny belonged to the " permanent staff " at Parknassilla ; so did Gleeson, the steward (successor of the unpleasant Johnson) ; and so did Dorohy, the boatman, who caught our fish, took charge of the boats and stroked the galley's crew when we crossed the bay with four or six oars. The men about the place were all amphibious, as used to handling heavy oars in a rough sea as they were to digging potatoes or harvesting seaweed at spring tide, and picturesque enough they looked in their gala rig, which some guest of long ago described in these lines :

" Across the waves did Mrs. Graves
Direct our navigations.
The red-capped crew wore shirts of blue
And white continuations."

That was in the early days before my mother's health broke down. As I best remember her she lay among her cushions in a wide and comfortable canoe while my father or some other skilful oarsman used the paddles. All our boats were mis-designated, but we never discovered this until Rosy married a sailor. We called the galley the gig ; the gig was known as the

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pinnacle ; the dinghy was the punt and the canoe the skiff. It was really ingenious of us to get it all so completely wrong. Later on we added to our fleet a broad-beamed jolly-boat which had brought ashore the whole crew of a small French ship wrecked in the bay. We christened her the *Fidélité*, after the lost ship, but of course the boatmen called her the "*Fiddle-light*."

Father Welsh, the old parish priest of Sneem, who cared for the souls of a widely-scattered flock, was a good friend to our family in our early days in Kerry. He interested himself in all our doings and was beloved by Protestants and Catholics alike. When *his* bishop came to hold a confirmation at Sneem, it was we who lent plates, knives, forks, and table linen for the lunch which followed the ceremony, and there was in all our intercourse a perfect understanding between us. But Cardinal Cullen made it impossible for white Catholic lambs to lie down with black Protestant sheep. We were indeed no longer sheep, but wolves, or at best goats, and the prelate who followed the genial and kindly Bishop Moriarty of Kerry told my father that he would have no communication whatever with him. "You go your way and I'll go mine" were his written words. Father Welsh was succeeded at Sneem by a very different type of man—polite, certainly, but hostile—and the old pleasant relations between ourselves and the parish priest were never renewed. Father Welsh was the prototype of "Father O'Flynn"—the ideal priest whose portrait was so happily drawn by my brother Alfred in the verses set by Sir

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Charles Stanford to an old Irish jig tune, the very tune to which we ourselves learnt our steps long ago at Parknasilla. Maynooth does not produce the type which came from St. Omer.

CHAPTER XIV

FRIENDS IN KERRY

No one who has read Mr. William Le Fanu's "Seventy Years of Irish Life" will need to be told what a delightful guest we had in him in the 'seventies and 'eighties. He and his wife with a selection of children used to come every summer to fish at Old Dromore, and on Sundays four of the party would lunch with us after the morning service at Sneem Church. His delightful face, his golden voice, his warm handshake can never be forgotten. Between lunch and tea he would tell us Irish stories of his brother's (the brilliant Sheridan), such as "The Quare Gander," as we sat amongst the rocks and the heather on some island point, or recite "Shamus O'Brien" or "Phauldrig Crohore," with such fire and pathos as made our cheeks burn and brought tears of sympathy to our eyes. And he could arouse explosions of mirth or thrills of horror and make our hearts gallop to the beat of his rhythm. He was indeed a splendid man, a rare type; hearty and refined, wise and gay, tender and strong. French Huguenot by origin, Irish in spirit, British in

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training, he combined in his personality essences to charm the fancy and hold the esteem and love of all who knew him.

Among our Kerry neighbours were Mr. Richard Mahony of Dromore and Mr. Townsend Trench, Lord Lansdowne's agent, at Kenmare. They, along with our own landlord,* Mr. Christopher Bland, of Derriquin, who owned fifty-two thousand acres of lovely but unprofitable country, had left the pale of the Church and become Plymouth Brethren at a time when the clergy in their neighbourhood were—impossible. This, not unnaturally, caused a certain embarrassment in our relations, hitherto of the most cordial nature, and when Lord Dunraven, father of the present peer, alone of his family joined the Church of Rome my father and mother felt and regretted the alienation which such a step inevitably produces among friends of long standing. The first Lady Dunraven had been Lily's godmother, her son, Lord Adare, Bob's godfather, and the elder "series" of my brothers and sisters had lived in intimate and happy friendship with the young people at Garinish, where they used to spend a great part of each summer in the 'sixties. I do not believe that any actual friction resulted from the secession of these friends from the fold of the Church of England, but it must have affected the spontaneity of the intercourse which had hitherto subsisted between all the members of our community.

Mr. Bland, Mr. Mahony, and Mr. Trench were, each in his different line, commanding figures in my

* My father bought Parknasilla from Mr. Bland in about 1880.

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treasury of childhood's memories—Mr. Bland drily humorous ; Mr. Mahony genial, chivalrous, and refined ; Mr. Trench abrupt in manner and original to the verge of craziness. I was not a little shy of Mr. Bland and afraid of Mr. Trench, but Mr. Mahony was a hero of romance. They were an interesting trio.

In the 'seventies Sir John Colomb bought Drumquinna, nine miles from Parknasilla on the road to Kenmare. His was a very attractive personality. His handsome face with its aquiline features and flashing eyes, his genial manner and the intelligence and rectitude which made him so valuable a member of Parliament (where for many years he represented Bow and Bromley and, incidentally, kept an eye on the interests of his old corps, the Royal Marines), endeared him to his neighbours. I personally shall never forget his kindness when as a cold and tearful schoolgirl I met him at the "half-way house" on my way back to England after the summer holidays in 1876. It was a wild, wet September day, and he made me descend from my outside car and get into his snug brougham to drive with him the remaining fifteen miles to Killarney.

The old knight of Kerry, father of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald,* who succeeded him in that ancient and picturesque title, reigned at Valencia in my young days. I saw him once only and was impressed by his dignity and goodness, but it was the curious indefinable charm, not to be described or analysed, for which this branch of the Geraldines is famous that attracted me.

* Died 1916.

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The same mysterious gift has been handed down to the descendants of the Sheridans, among whom the late Lord Dufferin was so conspicuous. Not every member of the families with whose blood this magic drop is mingled can claim to possess its power, but I never met a Valencia Fitzgerald who had it not, and in Mr. W. Le Fanu and his brother Sheridan it was strongly marked.

Another well-known character of whom I used to hear my father speak was Sir James O'Connell, who lived near Killarney. He was brother of the "Liberator," as Dan O'Connell, who could "drive a coach and four through any Act of Parliament," was called by his admirers. Sir James was as level-headed and law-abiding as his brother was dashing and subversive, and possessed a keen wit, evidences of which have been preserved in many an anecdote of which he was the hero. His opinions and decisions were regarded with the highest respect by his neighbours, and not a few litigious Kerry men settled their differences out of court after referring them to Sir James. One of these came to complain that the lame sister of the girl he had intended to marry had been palmed off on him at the wedding when he was unfortunately too tipsy to notice the exchange. "Had she the same fortune as her sister?" asked Sir James. "She had, Sir James—to a goat." "Then what ails ye, man?" asked Sir James: "*Sure ye didn't want her for a steeplechaser.*"

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CHAPTER XV

ALGIERS

MY father's health in the late autumn of 1878 necessitated our wintering in a climate milder than any to be found in the British Islands, and greatly to my delight his choice fell upon Algiers. It was in our day far from being a populous health resort. Pau and Biarritz, Cannes, Mentone and San Remo, accommodated the bulk of those for whom an English winter proved too trying, and Egypt received the few who had the means and the inclination, or the precise condition of health, to make so long a flight from these shores desirable.

Our first winter in Algiers opened badly, for in ignorance of its unsatisfactory health conditions we took a flat in the town itself, where we were tormented by mosquitoes, maddened by street noises, and badly fed by the neighbouring hôtel whence our meals were sent in. My father's health suffered, and we were glad when he was persuaded by his two old friends, Anne, Countess of Kingston, and Lady Louisa Tenison, to shift our quarters to Zammit's ramshackle hôtel, the only one in those days at Mustafa Supérieur. Here we found ourselves close to the Campagne du Télemly, where lived Mr. Edwin Arkwright and his sisters, musicians all and kindest of neighbours. Mr. Arthur Smith-Barry (now Lord Barrymore) and his first wife, who as Lady Mary Wyndham-Quin had

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been the friend of my elder sisters in Kerry, were near at hand in their beautiful Moorish house, old but judiciously modernised with a view to comfort, and possessing a garden full of beautiful things. Presently we shifted from the hôtel and settled down in a funny little villa on the Télemly road, where we were modestly housed but quite comfortable.

It was a limited but extremely pleasant society in which we found ourselves, and the country was so beautiful, the climate so sunny and genial, that my father's health and spirits benefited almost immediately. Shortly after our arrival we had made, by accident, the acquaintance of one of the most lovable and attractive elderly women it has ever been my lot to know, but, by design, on both sides, the acquaintance ripened into a prolonged friendship. Lady Charleville* had shortly before our arrival in Algiers bought the villa above the Colonne Voirol formerly occupied by Colonel Playfair, British Consul in Algiers, and when we set off from our hôtel to return Mrs. Playfair's call our driver took us by mistake to Lady Charleville's villa. Simultaneously arrived a rather unattractive pair of tourists, rich but unpolished, and together we made our entry into Lady Charleville's drawing-room, unannounced, as it happened, for her brother-in-law, Major Milner, who had been "discovered" in the garden, piloted us all nameless into the house. My father's dress proclaimed him a bishop, but the rich couple had neither distinguishing mark nor mark of distinction. We soon discovered our mistake and

* Widow of the last Earl of Charleville

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regretfully retreated, although Lady Charleville told us afterwards she would have liked to retain the bishop and discard the Bilkinses, who were, like ourselves, bound for Mrs. Playfair's hospitable house. A couple of days later Lady Charleville called upon us at the Hôtel de la Régence with her niece, Lady Emily Bury, and completed our subjugation.

I should have been perfectly content to be idle—eight years of school life had left me, shocking as it may appear, with no wish to continue improving my mind—but when my father discovered that the great violinist Vieuxtemps, old and in poor health, was passing the winter in Algiers, he consulted him about the prosecution of my training, and I became the pupil of Vieuxtemps' pupil, M. Smetkoren. It would be satisfactory to record that my lessons bore fruit and that I became a brilliant performer. Alas ! this was far from being the case. Like all my people, I was "musical" in so far that I had a correct ear, could play accompaniments acceptably, and possessed a rather pretty singing voice which was useful in part-music, since I read easily ; but my soul was too small to carry me through the drudgery of that constant practice without which no one can play the violin as it deserves to be played. Like most strenuously educated girls, I wanted above all things to enjoy myself, and this I succeeded in doing at Algiers, where the surroundings favoured my design. There was but little dancing, but there were occasions upon which all who were young and gay could meet. We played lawn-tennis and picnicked, and we had the more sober

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joy afforded by the proceedings of a choral society which met at the house of Miss Leigh-Smith and Miss Blythe, near the Colonne Voirol. Miss Leigh-Smith was a most accomplished woman, delicate in health, but full of courage where art and literature were concerned. Miss Blythe was what in modern parlance would be called a "perfect old darling," and much of the pleasure we got from our evenings at the villa of these two ladies was due to the cordial kindness showed us by Miss Blythe. On one non-musical occasion we were set down to play a difficult game of rhyming—a rather aggravated version of *bouts rimés*—and I was dismayed rather than inspired by being given as an illustration this really brilliant specimen, the work of two previous players. One player had drawn the words *supposes* and *noses* out of which he constructed the question,

"What is the reason, as you supposes,
That English girls has turn-up noses?"

This ethnological query was answered by a second genius to whom *surmise* and *eyes* had fallen—

"The reason is, as I surmise,
They turns 'em up to see their eyes."

A good number of yachting people used to come to Algiers, and Mrs. Gerard Leigh's *Chazalie* was perhaps the finest yacht from the sightseer's point of view. One night we dined on board Lord Middleton's, the *Lady Isa*, and I had my first experience at close quarters of the Scottish bagpipes. The few drops of Highland blood I possess enable me to enjoy the

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pipes in the open air, and a kilted regiment swinging along to the beautifully savage skirling of a tune I know and love swells the poor trickle to a flood. But a piper parading round the table of a yacht's cabin *braying* like an inspired donkey of incredible lung power seemed to me a dearly-purchased privilege.

Sometimes a French man-of-war came into harbour, and once we went on board the flagship of a small squadron which visited Algiers in 1880. It is well known that long after the army of France had become democratised her navy remained an asylum for the sons of aristocratic families desirous of serving their country, and we were hardly surprised to see in the flagship's ward-room three brutally clever frescoes caricaturing Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Equality was symbolised by two grossly fat hogs eating out of one trough, Fraternity by two drunken bacchanalians reeling arm in arm down the street. How Liberty was depicted I cannot now remember. This was, of course, barely a decade after the re-establishment of the Republic ; but Algiers was red, very red, and it might have been supposed that the home authorities would have defaced or veiled pictures certain to offend democratic eyes.

We knew few French residents at Algiers, but there was one lady, honourably received by the English colony, whose canary-coloured hair and peacock voice failed to recommend her to us. It was told of Mme. de Z—— that one Sunday evening, finding her dinner party composed of twelve men reduced by some

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accident to eleven, she exclaimed: "Tant pis ! Pour éviter le malheur Louis dînera dans sa chambre." "Louis" meekly acquiesced in this decree of banishment, and his wife was wise in her generation, for the party would have been a failure had she resigned in favour of her dull and obedient spouse.

Lily and I were seized upon by Mr. Arkwright to sing in the choir of the English church in the town, and, though we were both assiduous in our attendance, it was Lily who proved a mainstay to the little group of amateurs which varied in number and quality as any such collection of "casuals" must. Mr. Arkwright was our conductor, and his sister Fanny (afterwards Mrs. Hill-James) played the organ. The former was very deaf, but this did not interfere with his sense of rhythm, and whatever else he missed he was exquisitely sensitive to a discord. One Sunday during the sermon I watched with intense interest a large bright green praying-mantis which, attracted by the flowers in the bonnet of a maiden lady seated immediately in front of me, had elected to pray among these artificial blooms. I never thought it would jump, but jump it did, with its ungainly limbs sprawling in every direction—and I jumped too ! It was a painful experience for a girl of nineteen, who blushed readily and profusely. Sacrilege was the crime of which I felt I had been guilty, and I had also made myself conspicuous, so I was glad when service was over and I could explain to the chaplain and Mr. Arkwright the cause of my extraordinary conduct.

A celebrity in the shape of a famous lion-hunter was

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at Algiers in 1879—80. This was M. Bombonnel, a much-scarred and twisted little veteran, whom we regarded with interest not unmixed with amusement. He was very excitable, and threw himself, hands, feet and all, into the descriptions of his encounters with the king of beasts with which he regaled his admirers. One day a friend calling at the house of two extremely correct English maiden ladies was surprised to find M. Bombonnel performing the motions of a swimmer for the edification of his hostesses. He was miraculously poised on the front of his waistcoat upon the music-stool and was illustrating the action of swimming with all four limbs. Whether this was merely a demonstration or an incident in a practical lesson during which M. Bombonnel's pupils would have to copy their instructor's movements I could not discover.

CHAPTER XVI

SPRING TRAVELS IN ALGERIA

As the spring advanced we would make each season a driving tour, more or less prolonged, in the interior. In this way we visited Kabylia, one of those small mountainous countries which produce and maintain a people differing entirely in ethnological respects from their immediate neighbours. The Kabyles are a hardy race—tall lean and muscular, with hazel

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eyes and a skin fairer than that of the Fellah of Lower Egypt. We stayed at Fort National and thence descended three thousand feet on mule-back, ascended another three thousand, and found ourselves at Beni-Enni, a village in which Jesuit Fathers had established a school. These priests were wise as well as learned, for they made no attempt whatever to convert their pupils until they had taught them reading, writing, and arithmetic. When their kindness and patience as instructors, and also their medical skill, had endeared them to the children and their parents it was easy for them to superimpose the religious teaching which it was their chief object to impart. We ate our pic-nic lunch in the schoolhouse, and when my father's French was exhausted the conversation between him and our hosts was carried on in Latin, as had often been the case in Rome when he found himself in the company of men more learned in dead than in living languages.

We visited the great cedar forest of Teniet-el-Haad on another occasion, arriving at the small garrison town at a moment when all its inhabitants, military and civil, were on the eve of a day's pleasuring in the forest. In the primitive inn there was no bath of any description, so we took turns to use *le bol des poulets*—a large earthenware crock with so small a base that a bather could stand on only one foot while performing his precarious ablutions. When we made inquiries after breakfast respecting mules to carry us to the forest and back we found to our dismay that every horse, mule, and donkey of repute was already bespoke

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for the *fête*. Three sorry animals were produced, and seated on *bâts*—stout canvas-covered bolsters stuffed with I know not what—we presently set off and reached the heart of the forest to find the revels in full swing. Smart officers and red-trousered *piou-pious* and every available female—our own chambermaid among them—were playing a gigantic game of kiss-in-the-ring in the shade of the great cedars. They sang a rhyme the last line of which ran “*Embrassez celle qui vous plaira !*” and I am sure every girl and woman was “pleasing,” for I never saw such an exhibition of chasing and kissing. The forest was superb, and we were glad to get out of sight and hearing of the crowd, and, alighting from our forlorn and weary mules, sit on the grass beneath the spreading fans of these monarchs among trees. It never occurred to my British mind that we, and not the denizens of Teniet town, were the intruders, and when we retraced our path I felt aggrieved on finding that the entire gang of revellers was already under way, so that we jogged along the one and only road, none too wide, which overhung a considerable precipice for some miles, in their noisy company. Our mule-driver had lost the apology for reins with which I had striven to guide my weak but obstinate animal in the morning, and I had to direct it as best I might with an inadequate pocket-handkerchief, one end of which was knotted round the top of its headstall. My feet—I sat sideways on my lumpy bolster—actually dangled over the precipice for a time, and the thundering of many hoofs, the merry-makers’ shouts, and the thrusting

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and shouldering of other mules and horses would have made any animal less abject than the poor beast on top of which I sat helpless show alarm or resentment. Suddenly a bold soldier riding on my right addressed me, and after subjecting me to a short catechism in which he exhibited considerable interest in England and the English he suggested that we should engage him as a groom and convey him to our island home. I endeavoured to point out with politeness the unsuitability of such an arrangement, but he was not to be quelled. "Dites donc, Mademoiselle ; je sais déjà quelques mots d'anglais. *I lof you*—qu'est-ce que ça signifie ?" "Je vous aime," I replied, stiff and unsmiling. I ought to have said it meant *filet de bœuf* or *pommes de terre*, but the combination of a precipice, from the verge of which I was quite powerless to withdraw my mule, on one side and a cheeky soldier-groom equally unavoidable on the other had unnerved me, and the inevitable sequel "Eh bien, *I lof you*, Mademoiselle" made me for the moment prefer the precipice to the *piou-piou*. And yet the mule to which I clung would never have permitted me to involve him in my suicide. At last the cavalcade got shuffled, and when I dared to look over my right shoulder I found the too-amiable soldier had disappeared.

One spring we went by steamer to Bona and drove thence by way of the fine but gloomy Gorge of the Chabet to Sétif. It was a two-days' drive, between rocky cliffs for the most part, with the noisy river foaming beneath us, and our night was uncomfortably

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spent in a rest-house where there was but one guest-chamber, in which we lay down in our clothes. Only the French *Génie* could have accomplished so difficult a task as the engineering of that Chabet road, and only the *cantonnier* system could have maintained its surface at such a pitch of perfection, for the torrent itself and the steeply overhanging cliffs provided constant menaces to its security.

From Sétif we proceeded by train to Constantine, in which curious spot we passed a week. It has been described almost as often as Ronda, which it much resembles. One permanent bridge connects it with the surrounding plain, and it is encompassed by a wide dry ditch several hundred feet in depth. Its narrow and crooked streets were thronged with Arabs of every shade, class, and tribe wearing their distinctive dresses, besides the inevitable Jew and the elegant Moor, clad according to their kind. There were Arabs of the desert in great numbers in white burnous and white turban covered with the hood of the burnous and wound about with a long fine rope of camel's hair, Biskris in their coats of many colours, and Mozabites in loose black-and-white-striped jackets. And of course there were soldiers—red-and-white-robed Spahis, trim Zouaves and baggy-trouserred Turcos, besides the men of the *Infanterie de la Ligne*. There was very little in the way of a European quarter, and as Lily and I were gazing one day into a shop, where barbaric jewellery and curios so curious that we wondered where, how, and for what they were made were displayed in tumbled heaps, a fair and rosy-

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cheeked young Turco said to us suddenly in the English of London: "This is no place for you girls, you'd best be getting back to your hôtel." He passed on at once, and we were left wondering whether some piece of bad luck or merely the love of adventure had turned the English lad into a Turco. But we took his advice and hurried back to our hôtel.

We halted at various straggling villages on our two hundred and fifty mile drive back to Algiers, which we accomplished in five days with the same horses! Our luggage was very light and the carriage a small victoria with a queer little third seat hooked on at the back. One horse was a tall, bony Norman *percheron*, the other a small Arab *barbe*, and our driver told us the Arab was far the hardier of the two, could lie out on the coldest nights and subsist on considerably less than his French comrade. I passed one night in a bed placed conveniently (for air) under a hole in the roof, but it rained so hard that I had to sleep under my umbrella. In another of our resting places a little wild boar, striped as wild boars are in early youth, was a domestic pet and trotted on slim, stiff legs in and out of the bare *salle-à-manger*, secure of a welcome. We halted one day to eat our lunch on the edge of a desolate-looking hamlet and asked the sad-faced wife of a struggling French *colon* to sell us some lettuce from her garden. She cut and washed it, added some cold boiled *mange-tout* peas and watched us open a tin of sardines. Its contents along with some vinegar went into the salad bowl, and after we had lunched the poor thing begged us to give her the two broken

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sardines which remained in the bowl. With tears in her eyes she said : " It is five years since I have seen a sardine." There is no nostalgia more complete than that of the French colonist.

It was near the end of May that year when we left Algiers and went home in a Moss steamer. She was a cargo boat calling at various ports, and we had to wait nearly three weeks at the Hôtel de la Régence in the town before she appeared, for we had given up our villa at the Colonne Voirol before going to Constantine. There were only menservants in the hôtel, and when Lily and I were sorting things out before packing up there was no convenient chambermaid upon whom to bestow our much-holed stockings and other worn-out garments. Late one night we rose from our beds and flung pair after pair of cast-off stockings out of the window. Our aim was faulty, and next morning we discovered that two had lodged in the flat-topped plane tree opposite, one of gaudy red silk and another of scarcely less conspicuous black. We felt that all Algiers must see and recognise them, and Lily's were carefully marked ! Fortunately some prowling *gamin*, not scrupulous enough to inquire into their antecedents, spied and removed them, and we breathed again.

When our steamer appeared we found ourselves lodged to our dismay in a cabin whose larger port looked for'ard over a hold containing a consignment of highly-perfumed Spanish onions, and never save during our day ashore at Gibraltar could we wholly escape their pervading and penetrating odour. Our

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little party on board consisted, beyond our three selves, of Canon Blomfield, Rosy's father-in-law, and his wife and Lord Kingston,* and as we all stood outside the Post Office at Gibraltar a bearded personage in plain clothes came up and laid a detaining hand on Lord Kingston's shoulder, saying, "I arrest you as a deserter." Lord Kingston's blue serge suit was certainly rather shabby, and his beard and flashing dark eyes might have been those of a seafaring desperado, but when a gaitered bishop and a minor, but equally respectable, Church dignitary swore to our friend's identity the arm of the law relaxed its grip and the chief police constable became our apologetic friend. He conducted us to the fruit and flower market, and took such care we were not cheated that we returned on board our steamer weighed down with palm-leaf baskets containing every conceivable fruit and flower then in season at the cost of a few shillings.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BISHOP'S GRANDCHILDREN

As time went on grandchildren old enough to be interesting to my father came with their parents to Parknasilla. From a very early age John Powys,

* Father of the present peer.

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Helen's boy, was a particular friend and ally of mine. He was my eldest nephew and I his youngest aunt, and in all the letters he ever wrote me, from the short and bald half-sheet of the small schoolboy to the three-sheeted chronicle of the young soldier in India, he signed himself "Your faithful cavalier, JOHN." Dark-eyed and thoughtful, with flashes of humour lighting up his rather serious face, steady but never stolid, conscientious but very human, he was unlike any of us, and no aunt of twenty ever had a more gallant comrade than I possessed in John at the age of ten. He never failed me in all his short life, and when that was quenched in the Tirah expedition of 1897 my loss was unique and irreparable. I do not think he ever caused real pain to his parents. He understood while very young that they were not rich, and would cheerfully do without what other boys demanded as a right, not in any exalted spirit of self-sacrifice, but simply because he loved his father and mother. Not brilliantly clever, he made up, and more than made up, by hard and thorough work for the absence of genius, and he was every inch a man.

However hard his task, he tried to make something of it, and I have kept all these years—ever since 1880—the verses written by him as a little fellow not ten years old at a preparatory school at Oxford. How any schoolmaster should have ordered a pack of small boys to write a poem on the terrible Tay Bridge disaster which befel a mail train in the last days of 1879 I cannot conceive. But John did his best,

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and his best was unintentionally and painfully funny :

“ Now the wind blows loud and strong,
Shaking all the bridge along,
But wince not, budge not, gallant stoker,
Near the fire stand with your poker.

“ Then there comes an awful crash
And with it a dreadful smash ;
But wince not, budge not, gallant stoker,
Near the fire stand with your poker.

“ Down sinks the train into the deep ;
Many gentle mothers weep ;
But wince not, budge not, gallant stoker,
Near the fire stand with your poker.

“ On the next day were divers sent,
On bringing up dead bodies bent ;
But wince not, budge not, gallant stoker,
Near the fire stand with your poker.

“ Several bodies there were found ;
But every one of them was drowned ;
But wince not, budge not, gallant stoker,
Near the fire stand with your poker.”

John's mother, my dear sister Helen, died the day my boy was born, and John, just confirmed at Marlborough, was Roger's godfather. He was not neglectful of his godson, and when he was working in London for the Indian Staff corps in 1896 he would find time to take the little fellow to Maskelyne and Cook's or some such fascinating entertainment during his holidays. He had successfully passed his examination, and was coming home in the following year,

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from India where the 52nd, his hereditary corps, was stationed, when the Tirah trouble supervened and he never returned.

Next in age among the grandsons came Philip,* Alfred's eldest boy, uncannily clever, fair as an angel, and distractingly untidy and unpunctual. He must have been between five and six when Lily, intent on rounding up for their midday meal the small fry staying at Parknasilla, called to him: "Philip, didn't you hear the gong?" and Philip, busy with a story-book, replied unmoved: "I *heered*, Aunt Lily, but I did not *heed*." His sister Molly, the sweetest little maid of four, would try to mother him in those days, pulling up his stockings and endeavouring to tie the ribbons that confined the black silk handkerchief of his sailor suit. She had the black-lashed blue eyes of her mother's people, and when some indiscreet admirer expatiated in her hearing upon their colour Molly went to her nurse and told her Mrs. — had said she had *violet* eyes. Nurse demurred, but Molly was firm. "*Smell* them, Nannie!" she exclaimed.

Rosy's elder boy came close after Molly in age, and of all the grandchildren's treasured sayings Charlie's were the funniest. He would fix his large hazel eyes on whatever interested him, and when his wonder insisted upon expression out would come a question. An elderly lady, a widow, whose health compelled her to go about in a Bath chair, was one day the object of little Charlie's observation. The border of

* *Times* correspondent in Constantinople when war with Turkey was declared, 1914.

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her heavy crape veil concealed her mouth, and presently Charlie inquired: "Haven't you got any mouth?" She reassured him, and then "Haven't you got any legs?" followed.

In 1882, when he was three, Charlie arrived from Egypt with his mother to spend the hot weather in England. My father, who was in London, went to inspect his little grandson in the lodgings where they were staying, and Charlie was duly brought down by his nurse and popped inside the door of the back drawing-room, his mother and grandfather being in the front room. Unobserved he took the episcopal hat from the chair where my father had placed it and *hung* it on his small head. Then, grasping the episcopal umbrella, he stumped into the room beyond and, peeping under the broad hat-brim, piped out to the unknown guest: "And who are you, you funny old monkey?" My sister's filial respect was outraged, her pride in her son discounted, but the situation was far too absurd to be treated seriously. Charlie had been called a funny little monkey so often by his nurse that he certainly thought the words expressive of affection and possibly admiration.

Not many months later when I made the voyage to Egypt with my sister and her two little boys Charlie proved himself the best sailor among the passengers, and after his nurse (between paroxysms) had succeeded in washing and dressing him he would prance about in the highest spirits, monarch of the saloon out of which the first-class sleeping-cabins opened. Among the passengers there chanced to be a little girl whom,

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before the billows of the Bay laid us low, my sister had marked as an unsuitable playmate for the less critical Charlie, and now that she and her parents as well as all Charlie's guardians were precluded by sea-sickness from any interference with his concerns, his independence asserted itself. Up and down the saloon he marched, chanting over and over again, loud and clear, these unpardonable words: "Emily Barton, Emily Barton, *my* mother says you are a horrid little girl and I'm not to play with you—but I *will*." And we were all incapable of silencing him! Happily there were no reprisals, for we were one and all so thankful to reach Gibraltar that peace and good-will reigned in every heart.

Charlie was nearly three when the massacre of Alexandria took place in June, 1882. His father was Controller of the Port and lived close to the Arsenal gates in a big square Arab house overlooking the harbour. On Sunday afternoon, June 11th, Charlie and his baby brother had gone with their nurse for a drive in the victoria to the Khedivial Gardens on the bank of the Mahmoudieh Canal and were returning to tea, all unconscious of the carnage going on in the streets of Alexandria, when they caught sight of some unfortunate Europeans being hunted by a pack of blood-thirsty Arabists. The nurse, a sensible Englishwoman, kept her head and ordered the Arab coachman to drive to the British Consulate for protection, but they passed on their way through such scenes of horror and brutality as could never be forgotten. The Consulate gates were opened to receive them and they

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were safe. Between the harbour and the Consulate lay a network of narrow Arab streets as well as the whole length of the Place Mehemet Ali, and it was in these streets that the worst of the massacre took place. Lord Charles Beresford had been lunching with the Blomfields at Port House, but was obliged to return on board H.M.S. *Condor* when it was known that trouble had broken out. My brother-in-law, determined to do what in him lay to discover the fate of his children and their nurse, put on the tarboosh and "Stambouli" (single-breasted coat), which as a servant of the Khedive he was entitled to wear, and started off on foot. Through the tortuous streets of the Arab quarter he made his way unmolested, although his fair skin and blue eyes proclaimed his nationality, but when he reached a certain important *zaptieh* (police station) half-way to the Place Mehemet Ali an Arab came out and implored him to enter. Some of the *zaptiehs* it was found later had become slaughter-houses for Europeans who had thought to find in them protection and shelter, but the motive of the man who stopped my brother-in-law was pacific and merciful. An Englishman lay dying within, stabbed by some savage follower of Arabi Pacha, and holding Captain Blomfield's hand he presently breathed his last. This was an engineer officer from one of our ships, and I heard not long afterwards a curious story connected with his death, but whether accurately reported or not I am not now in a position to say. That Sunday afternoon in their house in Cornwall the parents of this officer distinctly heard these words uttered in the voice of

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their son: "Good-bye, father; good-bye, mother; I'm done for."

Released by the death of this innocent victim of an ambitious rebel, Massie Blomfield pursued his way, but it was long before he reached the Consulate and several hours before he was able to return to Port House with his children. What my sister suffered during the six awful hours which elapsed between the moment when she knew her children in deadly peril and that which restored them and her husband to her in safety very few people are in a position to know.

In little Charlie's mind the horror lingered, although he was only once heard to speak of it. Six months later he was with us listening to the band of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry at Mustafa Barracks, Ramleh, when a ragged Arab crept up and stood close beside us. Charlie turned upon him with clenched fists and blazing eyes. "Go away, wicked, bad Arab that kills English peoples," he shouted; "emshi, emshi!" (be off); and the man slunk away among the stones and scrub without a word.*

* Destined for the Navy, but to his bitter disappointment precluded from entering the Senior Service by temporary eye trouble, Charles Massie Blomfield obtained a commission in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and was a major at the time of his death near Ypres on June 9th, 1915. His was a very lovable character. Modest, generous, and unself-seeking to a fault, he was sometimes misunderstood, sometimes undervalued, until a flash of something like genius, a witty comment or fantastic simile, would make his hearers start and rub their eyes. His little book "The Young Officer's Guide to Knowledge," by "The Senior Major," published anonymously some eighteen months before his death, was a revelation even to those who knew him best. It was nothing less than brilliant, and placed him at once in the front rank of skit-writers. Many an exiled soldier in the tropics, many a weary fighter in the trenches, has laughed over its quaint and apposite absurdities.

LAND LEAGUE DAYS

CHAPTER XVIII

LAND LEAGUE DAYS

I HAVE run on to Egypt—that land of stirring events—without telling how things were going in Ireland in those bad years 1880—82, when the Land League instituted a reign of terror in Limerick and North Kerry.

Mr. Clifford Lloyd had been appointed Chief Resident Magistrate in a large and disturbed district, and it was from him we learned one evening at the rooms occupied by himself and his wife in George Street, Limerick, of the murder in Phoenix Park of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. No apologist in theory—and there are many such—for political and agrarian crime in Ireland can minimise the wickedness of this double assassination ; only criminals in fact and act could find it excusable, and we, law-abiding subjects of the Crown, regarded with horror and loathing the organisation which ordered, and the savages who carried out, so brutal a deed.

In South Kerry there was but little ill-feeling manifested towards the landlord class ; but the usual sympathy evinced by the untutored, or mistutored, Celt with agrarian crime was plainly noticeable. This sympathy is very strong, and a man who has got away from the police after shooting a landlord or agent from behind a hedge may live the sheltered life in some mountainous district secure of enjoying the best

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his hosts can afford. Indeed it is on record that one man, constitutionally disinclined for the effort of earning his bread, introduced himself as a murderer (agrarian) to some poor Kerry peasants living far off the beaten track and sponged on them until it transpired that he had never taken the life of landlord, agent, or policeman! Then he was flung out with contempt and obloquy to work or starve.

It was not pleasant to live in Limerick in those days. We felt we were rubbing shoulders with potential murderers when we made our way past a knot of uncivil "corner-boys" in the street. The constabulary were reinforced, and every one whose life was threatened—and these were many—was under the protection of this smart and wholly admirable body of men. By July, 1881, the Clifford Lloyds found that no one would let them a house or even part of a house, so my father *lent* them the Palace while we were in Kerry, and I spent some weeks with them there in early autumn. The stables and coach-house were full of mounted police and their horses, and none of us ever drove out unprotected. One day a number of us went to lunch at Sir Charles Barrington's at Glenstal, about twelve miles off, and just as we were on the point of returning Sir Charles received a message to say there were Land Leaguers on the look out for us, and a tree had been felled and laid across the road to hold us up. So we went home by another road. Mr Lloyd throve on the dangerous and exciting conditions of his life, but his wife was constantly anxious about him, for he was a marked man as well as a man of mark. His deep-set

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eye had an extraordinarily luminous quality—a lambent iris surrounding the large pupil—and his glance was penetrating and, to suspects, awe-inspiring. Original in thought and swift and fearless in action, he was a terror to evil-doers ; but his friends found in him much that was attractive and even heroic.

From Limerick I went to London to be for a third time a bridesmaid. The bride was Lady Emily Bury, whose friend I had become in Algiers, the bridegroom Captain Kenneth Howard, R.A., and my father tied the knot. I confess it grieved me that our gowns were white and yellow, for yellow was never my colour, and I envied my co-bridesmaid, Pamela Preston, of Moreby Hall, whose dark eyes and beautiful complexion were enhanced, not eclipsed, by a hue that bleached my cheeks and extinguished my hair. Any girl with a limited dress allowance will be able to feel for me when I say that it took a long, long time to wear out that gown—a present from my father. It was exasperatingly good in material and cut, but the day never came on which I looked even passably well in it.

CHAPTER XIX

LIMERICK IN THE 'EIGHTIES

LILY and I did not go abroad in the winter of 1881—82, but my father spent some months in Egypt,

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much to the satisfaction of my sister, Mrs. Blomfield, who accompanied him to Luxor. The 52nd Oxfordshire L.I. were quartered in Limerick, and my brother-in-law, Major Powys, with my sister and the children, stayed with us at the Palace, a very pleasant arrangement. Things were going very badly just then with the dependent members of Irish families. It was the Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the then Lord Lieutenant, who formed a committee for the relief of Irish ladies too old or too little skilled to support themselves by their own efforts when their small incomes failed through the non-payment of rent. My sister Helen was entrusted with the investigation of such cases as fell within the town radius of Limerick. No one could have been better fitted for the work, for she was as careful and discreet as she was sympathetic in dealing with the heartbreaking situations into which she had to inquire. I remember particularly one story she told me, giving no names, since secrecy in such matters was imperative owing to the pride and reserve which brought so many Irish ladies to their last crust and their last penny without complaint. Mrs. —, far more truly Irish by birth and heritage than many of her persecutors, was very old and nearly blind, and she was starving in a wretched garret in Boherbui, a most unsavoury district of Limerick, when her name was sent to my sister. Without loss of time Helen went to call upon her, only to find that she had died of want that very day. Her faithful old servant had just received a letter from her daughter in America enclosing a money order for

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two pounds. She told her beloved mistress of the windfall, hurried out to buy food and firing, and returned to find that the shock of so unexpected a reprieve had killed the old lady she would have died to save.

Limerick was a garrison town of some importance, maintaining a line regiment, a squadron of cavalry, one battery of Field, and one of Garrison Artillery. Without the co-operation of military officers our gaieties would have been limited; as it was there was a considerable amount of entertaining, unpretentious, perhaps, but none the less enjoyable. To races Lily and I were not allowed to go, and our very modest adventures with the County Limerick Foxhounds were brought to a sudden and complete end by the paternal veto; but there was no embargo on dancing, theatre-going and lawn-tennis, and it seems to me, as I look back upon my girlhood, that we had a great deal of fun in one way or another. It was not expensive fun. There was then just as much difference between the cost of social amusement in England and that in Ireland as there is between the valuable mechanical toy and the plaything improvised at home. In my day champagne was drunk at very few houses, and what were known as "tay balls" (tea balls) were far commoner than, and quite as pleasant as those where "wine," as it is now called, flowed as freely as claret-cup. Dancing was what we wanted, and from ten p.m. to four or five a.m. we danced with no more stimulant than that afforded by tea, coffee, lemonade, and our own good spirits. Chaperons, of course, ate ample

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suppers, but with the unthinking cruelty of youth I found this odd and scarcely commendable. Now when either duty or friendship takes me to a dance the announcement that supper will be served at eleven or half-past is thankfully received.

Of course we knew "everyone" in town and county. It is laid down by St. Paul that bishops be "given to hospitality," and much hospitality was given to us in return for ours, whether by the rich and great, the "intermediates," or the smaller professional gentry, and the early-acquired habit of making friends in every class is one which has brought me a great deal of happiness. I cannot imagine anything duller than belonging exclusively to a particular circle. One might as well be a tea-cup matching in value and design the rest of the set and unable to be the companion of a nice big earthenware dish, a cut-glass bowl, or a friendly china dog with a gold chain round its neck. No matter how learned, how "smart," how powerful the set into which I was born, I should be for ever longing to fly off at a tangent, a rover or a pirate, breaking into other circles, studying their ways, tasting their food and drink, mental or material, but free to stay or return as the fancy seized me, or as I found myself useful or useless, welcome or the reverse. Of course there are some circles I should never invade, just as there are some popular authors whose books I never read, some animals which must be for ever antipathetic. But I have never envied the mill-horse his round nor the convict his treadmill, and I hope to continue as long as life lasts making excursions into social districts

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other than that whose name is to be found on the label I have long ago mislaid.

In Limerick we were fortunate in having in the official and social circle to which we belonged by right plenty of good friends, and there are many names connected with my girlhood which, though their owners are dead or flown, married or estranged, stand for a great deal in my memory. The Bourkes of Thornfields, as brilliant as they were handsome; the O'Briens of Old Church, with hearts as true as their taste and their manners were exquisite; the Barringtons, stalwart, straight and capable; the Bannatynes, staunch and generous; the Bunburys, full of life and intelligence; this quintet of B's represents what was best, and best loved by me, in Limerick of the 'seventies and 'eighties. There is a new generation now, and a fresh admixture of social elements unknown to me. Were I to return there it would be as a Rip van Winkle; I should find white hair and tombstones, empty nests, change and decay, and I would rather keep my memories unspoilt.

Our radius in those days was limited to the scope of a pair of horses, for local trains were slow and inconvenient. Now and then my father would make a tour lasting a week or more in the outlying portions of his large diocese. Once he took Lily and me with him to the southern part of county Limerick, and we stayed for a couple of nights with the Muskerrys at Springfield and the Monteagles at Mount Trenchard. There was a huge dinner party at Springfield on the night of our arrival, and the two oval tables, placed end to

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end, seated a rather incongruous party of guests. After dinner a tall white-haired old gentleman, wearing a white tie, black coat and brown trousers, stood up with a clergyman's wife for his partner and danced a jig. Right well they danced it, and the brown-trouser legs were as nimble in shuffles, double shuffles, and batters as those of a young man. But the whole scene was more suggestive of Charles Lever than anything I have ever seen before or since.

When I read that Lord Muskerry's second son had been lost in the *Princess Irene* at Sheerness my mind went back to the early winter of 1878 when, as a pretty little fellow of about four years old, Cecil Deane-Morgan led me round the garden at Springfield, dull and colourless in its hibernation, and said when we returned to the house, "You must come again when the blue 'peddiwinkles' is out." It struck me as extraordinary that so young a child should know and care that there were such things as blue periwinkles and that they would come out again in the spring.

I caught a violent cold at Springfield, and, despite the heroic remedy prescribed and compounded by Lord Muskerry of whisky toddy with laudanum in it, I was completely voiceless when we went on to Mount Trenchard. However, I was able to enjoy the music made by Lady Monteagle and her sisters and applaud the admirable jig dancing of Frederica and Frank Spring-Rice. Demure and neat, eyes downward bent, the little lady footed it according to the best traditions, while her sailor brother stamped and

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flourished, and drummed with heels and toes with a zest and frenzy bordering on the grotesque.

I think it was in the following year that Lily and I paid a visit to the Knight of Glin and Mrs. FitzGerald, kindest of hostesses, near Tarbert at the mouth of the Shannon, and here I met naval officers for the first time, as the guardship was stationed at Foynes. I cannot say I liked my first party on board ship. A junior officer played "Bonnie Dundee" very slowly on the harmonium for us to waltz to, and we danced on the rough brown carpet of the ward-room in our walking shoes! Of course it was absurd to judge of the navy, its attractions and its value, by this isolated and depressing experience. Three years later I changed my opinion with the whole-hearted revulsion of feeling common in the young.

CHAPTER XX

ALEXANDRIA

IN November, 1882, not five months after the bombardment of Alexandria, I went out to stay there with my sister, Mrs. Blomfield. We disembarked at Suez and spent a very uncomfortable night in the hôtel, which was crowded to overflowing. At the other end of our table, eating their dinner in sombre silence, were seated Colonel (afterwards Sir Charles) Warren

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and the officers conducting with him an inquiry into the tragic disappearance of Professor Palmer, Captain Gill, and Lieutenant Harold Charrington, R.N. Mr. Charrington's brother and sister (afterwards Mrs. R. A. Montgomerie) were also staying in the hôtel, and that very day evidence of foul play had been discovered in the shape of the foot of one of the missing party.*

Next evening we reached Alexandria. Shattered houses, tumbled heaps of masonry, tottering walls and piles of still smoking *débris* stood out with peculiar clearness in the full yet tempered light of a moon riding high in the dark blue heavens. "Where is the Place Mehemet Ali?" cried my bewildered sister as we drove from the railway station. Where indeed? Of three sides of the long square nothing was left

* Curiously enough, it was Lieutenant Richard Poore (then unknown to me), temporarily in command of the old gunboat *Decoy*, who had taken Colonel Warren's party from Port Said to El Arish, in Syria, whence they started their search. On their arrival at El Arish, a most extravagantly deceptive mirage had caused Mr. Poore to wonder if his maps and charts had misled him. Instead of a low shore, behind which sand-hummocks formed a fringe to the desert beyond, lofty mountains rising steeply from a wide plain met his bewildered gaze, but an hour later the background had disappeared as completely as though some Titanic scene-shifter had been at work, and modest sandhills humped themselves along the shore. Colonel Warren was landed with his party, signalled to show all was well so far, and disappeared from sight, but the poor *Decoy*, not a mere lame duck, but a hopeless cripple, was for seven whole days drifting at the mercy of winds and waves up the Syrian coast. She should have gone to Port Said, but, very short of coal, she managed to make Famagusta, in Cyprus, where her distracted captain cleared out the coaling store and with forty-seven tons pursued his way to Malta, whither he had had no intention of going. It took him one calendar month to get from El Arish to Malta. Even St. Paul in his memorable voyage can hardly have been more sorely tried.

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intact but Abbat's Hôtel and the building where the main City Guard was posted. No wonder that she wept to find the landmarks familiar to her for nearly three years blackened, battered, swept away. To my eyes it was a fantastic sight. Old ruins I had seen in plenty, but there was a strange pathos in these still living houses, untenanted, sightless and deformed, which showed to alien eyes the furniture and hangings, mirrors and pictures within them, not unlike dolls' houses with the doors thrown back. The buildings in the neighbourhood of Port House were practically untouched, and in its large and comfortable rooms or looking from its windows upon the harbour where British men-of-war lay like faithful watch-dogs I forgot the desolation of the European quarter.

Everything was new to me; the weather up to Christmas proved delicious, and my sister and brother-in-law wanted me to enjoy myself. Beyond arranging the flowers, doing a few errands for my sister, and singing in the choir at the English church I fear I did nothing useful. But presently relief work for the poor folks made homeless by the bombardment occupied all charitably-disposed Europeans, and I found myself, as an appendage of my sister, attending a great meeting of ladies anxious to be useful. A soup-kitchen was started, and every morning I was employed in doling out basins of hot and greasy fluid to crowds of applicants. Then I was promoted to a more important post—I forget what—and this I lost through displaying too much zeal. I actually asked a lady of twice my age and a hundred times my experience to give me

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an account of money advanced to her the previous week because I had to make up my books. Haughtily she turned upon me, remarking for all to hear : " I have nothing whatever to do with *you*, Miss Graves." Rosy was so indignant, since the statement was not only inaccurate but most impolitely made, that she withdrew immediately from the Committee, carrying me in her train. I cannot have possessed any public spirit or sense of responsibility, for I was delighted to be relieved of my post and gladly surrendered my books to my successor in office, who proved, I hope, discreet as well as brave.

Many of the English residents of Alexandria and its suburbs did not return thither the winter after the massacre and bombardment, and the society in which I presently found myself was thoroughly cosmopolitan. Among the Greeks I made some delightful friends. The two unmarried Antoniadis girls (Marie, afterwards Mme. Musurus, and Efterpy, Mrs. Kingsbury) were clever, kind and attractive, and the two families of Dümreicher (Danes) provided me with four charming companions, while among the younger married women Mme. P. Salvago and Mme. Constantin Sinadino I loved and admired. Mme. van den Nest and Mme. Borchgrevink, witty and engaging Americans, I can never forget, and Mrs. Sydney Carver, whose husband was one of the great firm of cotton merchants, proved, and has ever remained, a most kind friend.

As there were not just then many young girls at Alexandria and Ramleh I had an extremely pleasant time, and was, I fear, considerably spoilt. Besides

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the ships in harbour there were two British regiments at Alexandria, and my few troubles arose from the difficulty of making my English partners understand the Continental practice of asking a *tour de valse* from a lady already provided with a partner. To the mind of a British partner the whole dance was his inviolable right, but my foreign friends thought otherwise, and the result was sometimes embarrassing, for black looks were cast from beneath British brows at the interlopers and cruel suspicions as to my good faith had to be allayed. Most of my foreign partners spoke a little English, some a great deal, and one or two had evidently learnt the language from an English nurse or groom, for it was pure cockney. I had always liked speaking French, and as the French of well-educated Greeks is particularly pure I felt I was combining the useful and the agreeable in a manner calculated to give me the least possible trouble when I found myself in the company of those who knew no English. I must admit that one or two of my foreign partners at dances or tennis parties annoyed me very much by their flow of pretty speeches, and when one of them threw a languishing glance at me and cried "*Toujours la main gauche!*" not less than eight times in succession as we met in the Grand Chain of the Lancers, I was so exasperated by his idiocy that I scratched him off my list of bowing acquaintances. Had I given the goose my right hand the entire figure would have gone askew.

I had never before been in a position to pick and choose from a positive crowd of partners, and I should have been at twenty-two a model of all the virtues

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had I not thoroughly enjoyed it. It seems to me that every girl ought to have just such a good time once in her life before settling down to matrimony or a profession. It is horrible for a girl to feel grateful to a man who asks her to dance ; more horrible to have her programme but half filled ; most horrible to find the courageous smile of the wall-flower slowly stiffening into a grimace.

CHAPTER XXI

CAIRO

My father and Lily arrived in January, 1883, and soon after we all went up to Cairo, where I remained for a month, returning with Rosy to Alexandria when the Bishop and Lily went up the Nile. Shephard's in 1883 was very unlike the Shephard's of to-day. It was a barrack of a place, scantily and poorly furnished. The bare boards of the dining-room floor, the long, narrow tables, unshaded lights, and indifferent food and attendance would have befitted a desert caravan-serai rather than one of the most famous hôtels in the world. But it was an institution, along with its terrace, upon which, sooner or later, one saw or met everyone of importance in Egypt. There, when the telegrams came in from Suakim during the fighting in the winter of 1883-84, Mr. Moberly Bell, *Times* correspondent, was often to be seen with a sheaf of thin heavily pencilled

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sheets in his hand and a dozen people clustering round him to hear the latest news. Sir Evelyn Wood, Baker Pasha, and General Arbuthnot were staying at Shepherd's ; Sir Archibald Alison with his wife and daughters lived not far off ; General Dormer and Sir Gerald Graham were at Headquarters. All of these might be met on the terrace after lunch, to say nothing of Sir Edward Malet, Sir Auckland Colvin, and Sir Gerald FitzGerald, representing British civil power. There was a stir in the air and an expectation of great events ; but there was laughter, too, and dancing and picnicking, riding and driving parties to the Pyramids and shopping parties to the Mooskee, besides the more serious occupation of visiting mosques, museums, and libraries.

Sir Evelyn and his staff sat immediately opposite to us at meals. As the clatter of dishes, the tread of hurrying waiters and the buzz of conversation made an incessant din, we were often driven to exchanging "chits" with our *vis-à-vis*, and Sir Evelyn would sometimes put a hand on either side of his mouth and literally "hail" us across the table.

Our first ball at Cairo was at General Dormer's spacious villa, which housed himself and other members of the Headquarters Staff. It was bewildering to have nothing but strange partners, and about half-way through the programme I found myself alone after a waltz had begun wondering with which of the many kilts I was engaged to dance. Then a slight, distinguished-looking elderly gentleman, with a pointed beard and grey hair, came down one side of the room and

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stopped before me. He was dressed in black and wore a broad sky-blue ribbon across his breast. "May I have the pleasure of this dance?" he said. "Perhaps I ought to wait for my partner," I answered doubtfully. "I'll give you up to him when he comes," said Lord Dufferin, "and you must forgive me for dispensing with the ceremony of introduction, for I am an old friend of your father's." So I danced with the man who had already been a Lord-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria, a member of the Government, British Ambassador successively to Russia and Turkey, and was at that moment Minister Plenipotentiary at Cairo—*without knowing who he was*. My laggard partner, better informed than I, made no claim on me when he saw me dancing with so exalted a personage, so I had a good opportunity of losing my heart to perhaps the most attractive man of his time in complete ignorance of his identity. A few days later we all dined at the temporary Embassy, and, as Lady Dufferin was suffering from an attack of fever, we were a small and informal party, with Lady Helen Blackwood in her mother's seat. Mr. Mackenzie Wallace was staying in the house, and also some great civil engineer who talked of irrigation works; but I sat on my host's left and, being now "put wise," as Americans say, appreciated my situation to the exclusion of aught else. As dinner was proceeding Lord Dufferin turned to me and asked confidentially: "Can you keep a secret?" "Always, if I know it really is a secret," I answered. "Well then," said he, "a great friend of yours is shortly coming to Cairo to reorganise one of

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the Government Departments—Clifford Lloyd.” I rejoiced of course, but I was also immensely flattered by the “confidence,” and went about fully conscious of my important secret until it was everyone’s property, which, I must admit, was so soon that no indiscretion on my part would have jeopardised the peace of two continents. Although she was then so young, Lady Helen Blackwood gave promise of the goodness and ability which have ever distinguished her, and which have gained for her the admiration of Australians since her husband, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, has been their Governor-General. Very few women have had the advantages which were hers as the beloved and trusted daughter of a most remarkable father.

Rosy and I were the fellow-travellers of the late Sir Claude (then Captain) Macdonald on our return to Alexandria, and I had no chance of asking him what he thought of our table “manners” on that occasion until I met him thirty years later dining at Lord Darnley’s. We had brought a cold chicken with us from Shepherd’s, but there were neither knives nor forks in the basket, and we had to dismember the bird as best we might with a blunt penknife and eat it in our fingers. It seemed to me impossible that Sir Claude should have forgotten so painful an incident, but he assured me he had no recollection of it whatever. His interesting and varied career in the Diplomatic Service had no doubt crowded out so small a detail, but for thirty years I had never heard his name without thinking of two hungry Irishwomen tearing and hacking

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at a cold roast chicken in an Egyptian railway carriage under the eyes of a tall fair Highlander who had already dined.

CHAPTER XXII

HAPPY DAYS AND HOT WEATHER

My brother-in-law had had a tennis-court made just behind the new quays of Alexandria, and here we had plenty of good exercise as the spring drew on. The *Orion*, commanded by that fine officer and enigmatical character Robert O'Brien Fitzroy, was now relieved by the *Invincible*, Captain R. More Molyneux, and among her gunroom officers I found such a set of cronies and playmates as I have never had before or since. From Mr. Prendergast down to little Mr. Everett, whose dark eyes illumined a small pale face, I knew them all, and Francis Pollen was not only an ideal sub., but my sworn ally. My sister, with a recklessness born of inexperience and the wish that I should be happy, imposed no restrictions on my association with this pack of boys, and as I was older than the eldest of them by two years I considered myself greatly their senior and far ahead of them in worldly wisdom. In fact they appeared to me like a group of schoolboys, only more amusing and more capable than any schoolboys I had ever met. No one objected to my becoming an honorary member of the gunroom

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mess, unless it was the naval instructor, who was reported to have said that I exercised a mischievous influence upon the junior officers.* Before I went to tea in the gunroom, a not infrequent occurrence, a general clear up of *débris* took place there. The only chair with a back to it was set for me, and I was regaled with bread and butter with brown sugar on top of it. The gunroom officers' housekeeping was meagre and the table equipage miscellaneous, but I had the best they could afford, and it tasted very good. To this day I have a copy of Nares' "Seamanship" from which I will never part, presented to me by the gunroom mess. It has an illuminated inscription on the flyleaf. Mr. Prendergast and Mr. Poland, senior midshipmen, were my kind and indulgent friends, and almost without exception their eleven juniors made niches for themselves in my affections of which neither time nor death has deprived them. There was Stafford Brown, as naughty as he was clever and original; T. C. Smyth, whose crowing laugh would have infected a Church congress; W. H. D'Oyly, a most faithful friend, and his cousin Hastings Shakespear, a handsome boy and admirable dancer; Frank O. Creagh-Osborne, small, dark, and neat with an engaging smile that showed the

* So many of my *Invincible* cronies have attained distinction in the Service that I cannot think my influence proved as deleterious as their naval instructor anticipated. Mr. Prendergast has reached flag-rank, Mr. D'Oyly is well up the captains' list, Mr. Creagh-Osborne is a captain and Superintendent of Compasses at the Admiralty, Mr. Hyde-Parker must be among the first fifty captains, and "little Mr. Everett" with the bright black eyes is a commodore and a C.B. As Admiralty regulations forbid me to see a current "Navy List," I write under correction.

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whitest of teeth, and two very small naval cadets, E. Hyde-Parker and Allan Everett.

One, alas! of the merry company died young—Felix Webber. Had he lived he would surely have made a name for himself. Malta fever need not have robbed the Navy of an officer of such great promise, but he was left lying on the deck of a dockyard tender for hours in a snowstorm the day he reached Plymouth invalided from Malta in 1884, and, though he rallied when placed under the care of his family, convulsions of the brain supervened and put an end to his short life in the following year.

My sister Rosy was undoubtedly a lenient chaperon. She was justified in believing I could look after myself, but in addition to the gallant band of junior officers of H.M.S. *Invincible* I made a friend of one of the lieutenants who was undeniably a detrimental. This was Mr. Poore, and he very soon became a *habitué* of Port House, a tennis and dancing partner, and, among other things, my rowing instructor. He would bring the skiff in to the landing-place just below the house, and many a pleasant hour did we have on the water with every officer-of-the-watch in the harbour acting duenna! But prospectless lieutenants must not be pressing suitors, and, though Mr. Poore and I were each equally certain of our own individual feelings for the other, the *Invincible* left for Malta without any interchange of confidence respecting their condition.

Summer was now well advanced and my father and Lily had returned to Ireland, but I remained with

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Rosy, and there was still plenty to amuse me, although the harbour had lost the ship which for four months had provided so much that was agreeable in the way of daily intercourse. The Khedive had transferred his Court from Cairo to Alexandria, and various persons and personages, useful or important, had come north at the same time. Among these were Mr. (now Sir Chauncey) Cartwright, second secretary to Sir Edward Malet at Cairo, and Major Chermside (later Sir Herbert Chermside and Governor of Queensland), of the Egyptian Army. They often spent a couple of morning hours at Port House, perhaps because it was near the Khedive's Palace at Ras-el-Tin, perhaps because there was very little to do. I may have been pugnacious—I am sure Major Chermside was—and I think I disagreed quite as often as I agreed with Mr. Cartwright, but of course the weather was hot and trying. One day Major Chermside said he had not been inside a church for several years, and I, inspired by a wish to do missionary work or simply by a demon of aggravation, remarked: "Then the sooner you go the better. To-morrow is Sunday, and the hours of service are so and so." Major Chermside went, but on his next visit to Port House told me that the pew-opener at St. Mark's—a dignified Englishman—had refused to let him worship with his tarboosh on his head, so he had indignantly withdrawn, feeling that the Khedive whom he served had been insulted. As a matter of fact a special clause in the Egyptian Army orders had been inserted permitting Christian officers to remove the tarboosh when in church, but this had been overlooked

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by Major Chermside, who had not previously found occasion to take advantage of the indulgence.

A huge moonlight picnic was given at Aboukir by members of the Greek colony about this time. We went, I think, by train, and there were droves of donkeys waiting to convey us to the seashore. After a cold collation we danced the "Lancers" on donkey-back—a most hilarious and confusing proceeding—and when this was over we were all so exhausted that we dismounted and sat about on the sand. My cavalier, whom I liked particularly and who had been a most acceptable partner at many dances, was now inspired to address me in warmer terms than usual. We had always spoken French together, but at this moment he most unfortunately dropped into English and began his speech with "Graves, darling!" which struck me as so comic that I was unable to respond suitably, or indeed at all, and welcomed the arrival of a third person who put an end to the *tête-à-tête*. This incident had no sequel. It merely illustrates the midsummer madness induced by meridional moonlight.

Cholera broke out at Cairo about June 20th, 1883, and raged desperately among the native population. The highest daily death rate was seven hundred and fifty, and if we at Alexandria had not been befriended by the strong northerly wind which prevails there until August arrives with its stuffy heat, we should not have remained on at Port House, as we did, for another six weeks. Then my brother-in-law decreed that Rosy and I should return to England, whither the children had preceded us in May, and, as it was doubtful whether

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we could board the homeward-bound P. and O. *Thames* at Suez, we went round to Port Saïd in an empty steamer and took up our quarters in a most comfortless hôtel, now extinct, where we waited for five blistering, sweltering days till our ship appeared. The cholera cordon round Port Saïd effectually prevented the ingress of fresh vegetables, meat and poultry, and we should have fared badly had not the *Iris*, commanded by Captain Rice (now Admiral Sir Ernest Rice), been close under our lee. I do not think we had any meals except early breakfast at that horrible hôtel, where mosquitoes, flies, and fleas, and worse than fleas, were rampant, for Captain Rice's hospitality was unstinted, and we were also kindly entertained by the very beautiful woman so long known as the Queen of Port Saïd, Mrs. Royle. But the *Iris* departed before the *Thames* came in, and the wailing of her syren (the first I had heard) heralded for us the inauguration of a forty-eight hours' diet composed almost entirely of bread and ginger-ale.

We flew on board our steamer as soon as her ladders were down, only to find ourselves very much *de trop*, since all the Indian passengers intending to use the Alexandria to Brindisi short-cut were debarred by Italian quarantine regulations from doing so. Why the ship took passengers from Egypt at all I cannot say, but there were several from Cairo who might reasonably have been regarded with greater suspicion than ourselves, for cholera only broke out at Alexandria ten days after our departure. Some second-class cabins had been converted by a stroke of the pen into first-

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class, and in one of these we passed a night of misery. It was very small, the port was closed as the ship was coaling, and there was a violently animated coal shoot just the other side of our bulkhead. Small wonder that we arrived in the saloon with little appetite for the breakfast at which we found ourselves brigaded with the rest of the "sick Egyptians," as we heard ourselves called by an anxious mother adjuring her little boy to give us a wide berth. But after breakfast a most remarkable thing happened. The purser came to tell us that two gentlemen from India (Mr. Troup and Mr. Lawson), total strangers to us, had volunteered to give up their beautiful five-berthed cabin off the first-class children's saloon to us in exchange for our cramped quarters! It seemed incredible that two such unselfish men should exist. Then the wife of an Egyptian official, more highly placed, or decorated, than my brother-in-law, protested against our being so favoured, but the purser maintained that the gentlemen had named my sister and myself as the ladies they desired to benefit, pointing out that Mr. and Mrs. X—— were already in possession of a genuine first-class two-berthed cabin. The fact that a coaling Arab had purloined a black silk stocking belonging to Mrs. X—— during the night because she had persisted in disregarding the advice of the stewardess respecting the closing of ports had ruffled her temper not a little. She had actually seen the lean and grimy arm of the thief as it came through the porthole, and so been in time to prevent the capture of the second stocking; but of what use is a single stocking to anyone possessing

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two legs? The Arab possibly incorporated his booty with his turban or wore it round his neck on cold days, but Mrs. X—— could find no solace in the stocking which remained to her, divorced as it was for ever from its legitimate partner.

CHAPTER XXIII

RECKLESS IMPRUDENCE

It seemed doubtful whether we should return to Egypt in the following winter (1883—84), but my father was laid up in London for some weeks in December with so severe an attack of bronchitis that the doctors hurried him away as soon as he could leave his bed, and we started for Port Saïd in the P. and O. *Rosetta*, well-named the “Rolling Rosey,” a few days before Christmas. There were a good many Australians on board, the first I had ever met, but Lily and I were so overpowered by the twang which disfigured the speech of some of the most attractive that we were well past Gibraltar before we discovered that it was in most cases a fortuitous, if regrettable, affliction, not necessarily due to defective education or breeding.

Captain Brady of the *Rosetta* was a capital storyteller, and one of his yarns I have never forgotten. When he was one of “Green’s midshipmen,” in the

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palmy days of the great East Indiamen, a passenger homeward-bound on board his ship had on more than one occasion succumbed to the influence of drink. The culprit was a fine upstanding woman weighing quite fourteen stone, and when she had transgressed in this way she became the terror of the stewardesses, for she was both noisy and violent. Brandy, spirits of wine, or eau de cologne she obtained somehow, and, though it was obvious that someone on board supplied her with these intoxicants, the captain was unable to lay his hand on the accomplice. He summoned a posse of midshipmen to his aid and told them that the next time the stewardess reported Mrs. Z—— as the worse for drink and unmanageable they were to capture and incarcerate her in the sail-room, but they were to refrain as far as possible from using violence, since she was, after all, a woman. The occasion soon arrived and the boys were summoned by the stewardess. With delicacy and despatch they put the lady foremost into a huge canvas sack (a "bread bag" of the largest size), conveyed her to the sail-room, *hung her up* on a stout peg just clear of the floor, and left her there with the rats, innocuous but alarming, for the night. She never broke out again on that voyage.

The *Invincible* was again at Alexandria when we arrived in January, 1884, but not Mr. Poore, who had been left behind with fever at Port Saïd. It was not long, however, before he appeared, and I was hardly surprised to find him as much my friend as ever, for the preceding six months had not passed without some correspondence of a strictly non-committal nature

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between Ireland and the Mediterranean Station. I could not if, I would, trace here the steps which led to what some people considered the catastrophe of February 21st, 1884, but those were very happy and exciting times. My gunroom friends were no less companionable because they scented a romance; indeed, some of them proved at a slightly later period willing and capable allies and confidants of two young people who had fallen into disgrace with their elders through the reckless imprudence which inspired one to offer and the other to accept and reciprocate what no money can buy and no power compel. We did not like having no prospects, and we could not but admit the propriety and common sense actuating my father when he said he could not permit us to become engaged; but no considerations of prudence could prevent our determining to be married, somehow, some day. I had to stifle Mr. D'Oyly's cordial congratulations and receive *en cachette* the token of our secret betrothal which Mr. Smyth, commissioned by Mr. Poore (doing a survey job up the Nile), brought me.

From that river survey Mr. Poore returned with his captain to Cairo on April 7th, only the day before our steamer left Alexandria for Brindisi. *Without leave* he ran down to Alexandria to bid me good-bye, and I have to thank my brother-in-law for conniving at an interview of ten precious minutes' duration unsuspected by my father and sisters.

We landed at Brindisi on our homeward way, spent a week at Naples before returning to Limerick, and very soon after I entered upon a period of great

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anxiety unsolaced by sympathy or support from my own people. They, influenced by perfectly sound motives, desired that I should get over my "fancy" for a detrimental as soon as possible, but I proved obstinate beyond all expectation.

CHAPTER XXIV

BETSY

DURING the summer of 1884 the health of our dear and faithful housekeeper, who had been nurse to everyone of us, began to fail. For some time, though I had not known it, her heart had been affected, but it was only at Parknasilla in September that I realised how serious was her state. She had always been my confidant, and more than ever had I valued her affection at this time when I could look for no comfort from my own people. Betsy was not only a most faithful servant; she was a woman of strong character and principle, refined and reticent in situations where her superiors in station might fail. At twenty-eight she had entered my father's service, and I often heard him say she was then the handsomest woman he had ever seen. She was a "Lancashire Witch," and possessed the deep blue eyes, black brows and lashes, and strongly-modelled features of the type. To the day of her death her wonderful masses of black hair, silvered

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only above her forehead, fell to her knees. She rarely let down the whole of its magnificence at a time, because it was too heavy to handle conveniently, and she would comb and brush each "section" separately before putting it up in the closely-twisted coils which stood out from her well-shaped head like the convolutions of some great polished snail-shell. For forty-two years Betsy lived in our family, identifying herself with our joys and sorrows, watching over us in sickness, ceaselessly caring for our comfort and well-being; darning, patching, and dress-making, washing my mother's lace, filling every domestic gap, meeting every domestic crisis, and keeping an eye on the servants and the stores. It was always "Where is Betsy?"—"Ask Betsy" when we were grown-up, as it had been "*I want* Betsy" when we were small. Somehow she never seemed to have a favourite amongst us, and if I took up more of her time and sought her company and affection oftener than the others it was because I had been her last baby and because there was so little mothering in my life that did not come from her.

During those last weeks she often said to me, "I wish I could see you married before I go." I do not think she ever complained, though she suffered both pain and discomfort, but on the night before she died she said: "I wish I could get to sleep. My heart's better, but my legs are worse." I rubbed the poor stiff legs, and she lay still while I read low and quickly from an old volume of "Household Words" till she dropped off. Next morning she was dead. She had

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slipped away from us in the early hours when brave souls so often quit the worn-out bodies they have animated long after less valiant fighters would have given up the struggle. My first thought was "She is happy and at rest," but very soon the overpowering sense of loneliness created by her loss came upon me and I mourned and could find no comfort anywhere.

I hid myself in a remote corner of the grounds when the unbearably prosaic preparations for the funeral began. I could not sleep at nights for listening for the cough that had troubled her rest, and though everyone, high and low, old and young, grieved for her, there seemed nobody but myself who could not do without her.

The whole countryside followed her to the grave one bitter October day when the Reeks were covered with snow and the sea and sky were of the hard dazzling blue that only a nor'-westerly wind brings. Her coffin was carried to the churchyard, two miles and a half away, by relays of willing countrymen—men who actually quarrelled among themselves for the privilege and gave up with a bad grace when their turn was over. For weeks afterwards I dreaded to go outside the grounds, for women, and men too, would waylay me with tears in their eyes to pour some long story of "Miss Robinson's" kindness into my ear, and I could never listen unmoved. They told me of the dresses and hats she had contrived for their children out of our leavings, the "petticuts and shifts" and flannel jackets and warm caps for themselves; the "grain o' tay" and "the bit o' sugar" she would herself buy

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for them, the money she had lent them (in some cases never repaid), the bad hands and legs and the sore eyes she had dressed and cured, and the good sound advice she had given them. "She was the grand woman ; God rest her soul !" was their invariable conclusion. And yet she was an Englishwoman and a Protestant, with a natural leaning towards her co-religionists.

If Betsy was ever severe in the nursery I have forgotten it. When Charley, Bob, and I worried her to give us figs or almonds and raisins and danced round her in the storeroom, shouting "Something good ! something good !" at the top of our voices, she would sometimes raise hers and say, "Get out from under my feet, childer, I'm *Heaven* " (even) "down moidered with you," or threaten to whip every one of us if we didn't hold our tongues ; but she never did whip us.

She was a grand woman : God rest her soul !

CHAPTER XXV

H.M. NILE STEAMER *NASSIF KHEIR*

MEANWHILE Mr. Poore, in command of one of Cook's Nile steamers, was painfully worrying and scraping his way up the Nile, which was not "taken at the flood." Cataract after cataract was scrambled through and over, repairs hastily effected to the crazy little

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paddle steamer, and, after many weeks of pulling and hauling by armies of Arabs, the *Nassif Kheir* reached Dongola. Between Dongola, Korti, and the Fourth Cataract she plied for months as a tug or a troopship, and it was only after Mr. Poore had left her in January, 1885, to join the Naval Brigade that the useful and gallant little vessel came to grief.

In a book of extracts from *The Times* collected between May, 1884, and February, 1885, I have kept a record of Mr. Poore's work during that period. He had returned in April, 1884, to his surveying work begun in the previous month—his charts were still in use during Lord Kitchener's successful campaign in 1898—and on May 22nd I read that an expedition under Captain Bedford of the *Monarch* (afterwards Admiral Sir F. Bedford), having for its object the patrolling of the river's banks to keep open the communications between Assouan and Wady Halfa, had been formed. Three steamers armed with Gatlings and Gardners were to cruise between these points, and of these two were lost in the cataracts. Lieutenant Poore, senior of the three lieutenants chosen from the ships then at Alexandria, commanded the *Nassif Kheir*, sole and most useful survivor of the trio. At Assouan she was prepared to receive men and guns, and figures in a telegram of June 11th as the "armed steamer *Nassif Kheir*, arriving at Wady Halfa."

The fall of Berber was announced in the same issue of *The Times*. Not till September 2nd was it possible to attempt the passage of the Wady Halfa cataracts. Seven hours of toil were required and six hundred

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men were employed in the operation, but she got safely through the Lower Gates. "A fortnight ago the task would have been infinitely easier," writes *The Times* correspondent, "but nothing was then ready"—the usual comment on British unpreparedness. With a steadily falling Nile the passage of each successive cataract became increasingly difficult and dangerous. "Not the smallest delay has occurred in Egypt," continues the correspondent. "Not a moment has been lost since the arrival of the gear in port, and officers and men in the armed steamer have worked night and day to get the material here before it was too late."

An attempt made on September 10th failed, but on the 11th the little *Nassif Kheir* was, by superhuman efforts which never ceased all day long, got over two more "gates." There was not an inch to spare on either side of the paddles. In the second gate she struck and grated continually, and at the same time two hawsers parted, causing her to drift heavily on to the rocks, where one of her paddles was smashed up. A boat bringing down a fresh hawser was wrecked, and the crew of one officer and four men found themselves pinned upon a rock in mid-channel. Mr. Poore used the third and last remaining hawser as a means of extricating them from their perilous position. He took a line out with him—a bowline—along the hawser, and by means of this they were able to scramble on board the ship, which was about forty yards away. The last to reach safety was Mr de Lisle, the young lieutenant, gallant and beloved, who was afterwards

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killed at Abu Klea in front of his machine-gun, which had jammed at a critical moment. "Operations were now suspended for the day. Some little progress was made."

Again on the 12th the ship was coaxed and hauled over two difficult gates, and by the evening of the 16th she had passed the Great Gate Cataract without accident, though the operation was much more difficult and dangerous than if performed at the proper season. "The greatest credit," says *The Times* correspondent, "is due to the naval officers and men engaged on this dangerous task."

From my husband's letters written to me between May 23rd, 1884, and June 5th, 1885, I have taken the passages given in the next chapters. The story of the Nile Expedition and the attempt to relieve Khartoum is now ancient history, but certain details connected with it may prove interesting to those of my readers who remember something of the struggle to reach Gordon and the lamentable delays which rendered the struggle abortive.

CHAPTER XXVI

LETTERS FROM THE CATARACTS

LIEUTENANT POORE started from Alexandria to take command of the *Nassif Kheir* above Assouan in the last week of May, 1884, and left Assouan with a

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crew of one officer (a sub-lieutenant) and twenty men on June 1st. They had been patrolling the river between Assouan and Wady Halfa for nearly a month with nothing of importance to record when Mr. Poore writes from Philœ :

“ Major Kitchener came in from the desert and came to look me up on board this afternoon, looking like a Bedouin. We have been working a good deal together lately, a certain Shemaun of the Mahdi's headmen having slipped through the Arab outposts, and got up towards Assouan. Major K. went to try and catch him, and I did all I could to help without being officious, and it has been great fun. Now he has gone back to make things unpleasant elsewhere.”

“ *July 15th.*—KOROSOKO.—Last night I got Major Kitchener off to dinner in Arab rig and mystified the blue-jackets completely. This wild sheikh, who came off and performed a *pas seul* on my sacred quarter-deck and sat on his haunches in a corner skirling an Arab song, was too much for them, and I am sure the skipper's intimacy with an Arab was voted risky. Hassan, the old interpreter (one of Cook's men), couldn't make him out at first, but later when I asked him to find out the visitor's tribe and all about him he smiled all over his face and said, ‘ I think he b'long England country, this sheikh.’ We had a wild ride in the evening, self, Scudamore (the Special, *Times*), Rundle (A.D.C. to Kitchener), Kitchener in his Arab get-up on a trotting dromedary with two followers on dromedaries, and two wild sheikhs (genuine) on ponies, whooping and yelling—a most motley crew, and in the eyes of the villagers not at all safe customers.

“ I heard a funny story the other day about Colonel Duncan. It seems he said to one of his Egyptian officers when arranging for gun practice, ‘ Demain nous aimerons

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à deux mille mètres.' It is possible, I have reason to believe, to *aimer* at even longer range."

" *August 3rd, 8.30 p.m.*—SECOND CATARACT.—One of the hardest and pleasantest days I have had for years. Started from Wady Halfa at 8 a.m., and came up to the first gate of the Cataract (the first steamer to try it for nine years). To begin with, an obstructive rock of the best granite simply drove itself against our nose, and I then discovered that the pilots were fools. After that we stuck in the sand, so we made our own arrangements, and crossed the bad bit safely. The pilots again proved blind guides in a narrow place no wider than an ordinary street with a torrent running through it. We bumped with a vengeance, but no damage was done. Then Commander Hammill (second in command to Captain Bedford) decided that Naval people only were to work the whole thing, so we started off again with myself in charge in the ship, and waving my orders to the people on the hawsers ashore. I never so perfectly enjoyed myself before. There was a mass of foaming water all round us in a narrow channel with steep rocky sides, a network of rocks before and behind us, hawsers from us to the bank, manned by crowds of excited natives from everywhere, and my wits sharpened by the pickle we were in. I wish I could describe it, but I am completely at an end of myself; my voice is like a crow's, my nose is like a red-hot coal, and we start early to-morrow for another day's work of the same sort. We made seven miles in twelve hours to-day. It's the greatest luck to be first over this cataract, and I don't see how many more steamers *can* come up this year."

" *August 5th.*—SECOND CATARACT.—I have been too hopeful, for we are still in the same place I wrote from two days ago. It is what everyone said; the business was put off too long, and endless delays have occurred, but I thought we might just do it, and now the river has fallen too low for us to get over the next gate. There is one

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cataract half a mile astern of us, and another half a mile ahead, the river steadily falling, and no chance, apparently, of getting on or back."

"*August 6th.*—SAME PLACE.—Whoever imagined that steamers could be taken through cataracts without risk was a fool. Lose the steamer if you like, but never be turned back by the first difficulty. A wire from Dongola says the river is falling, and is six feet lower than when Gordon's steamers went over. I am beginning to think that a low Nile and Gladstone combined make an insurmountable obstacle to our success. I, personally, would take my chance to-morrow, but I am not in authority."

"*August 20th.*—WADY HALFA.—I shall not be happy till I am well above this cataract (2nd), for then I shall not have to do tug-boat, and be sent back to Philœ never-endingly."

"*August 21st.*—WADY HALFA.—Four English regiments are coming up here, and eighty bluejackets to work the cataracts, and the old active service excitement makes me feel happy. I suppose they will push troops up to Dongola, and make that our base for the present, but they must be quick about it, for the Nile waits for no man, and low Nile will hamper everything. The natives are quite upset by the warlike look of things now that swarms of Englishmen are coming up. They didn't mind the Egyptian troops."

"*August 25th.*—SECOND CATARACT.—A long day, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the thermometer at 105° in the afternoon and myself up to my waist in water most of the time; but that is pleasant. Same thing to-morrow, but I like it hugely."

"*August 27th.*—Working from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. without a break. To-morrow we start again at 3.30 a.m. It is worrying work and sometimes I feel I could do it all so much better if I had a free hand, and I don't generally feel like that."

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" *August 29th.*—BETWEEN PHILÆ AND WADY HALFA.—Things look a little more hopeful now that our 'only General' is coming out, but it is the oddest business I have ever had to do with. There is no real head to it; nearly everyone seems bitten with the desire to be well in the expedition himself, and works for that end. I wish to goodness we had Commander Hammill at Assouan, but he has gone to Wady Halfa, where I hope to be in three days, and then I shall be under his orders. I believe in this route now instead of the Suakim to Berber one, but the difficulties of transport are tremendous. The old story—'Everything begun too late, and done with a scramble.' I took the first detachment of the 35th to Wady Halfa on the 15th, and the last only started on the 27th! Captain Hammill has seventy men and officers with him at Wady Halfa—Mr. Pollen is one of them—and I expect they are tearing their hair over the non-arrival of the hawsers I am now bringing them. Sometimes when we are tied up I go for a moonlight ramble in the desert, somewhat to the surprise of the Arabs, but my old interpreter says proudly, 'No wolf or hyena ever touch the captain. He too much clever man!'"

" *September 9th.*—SECOND CATARACT.—A most successful day this time, but a long one—4.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and off again to-morrow early to get through a very nasty gate. Only good swimmers are left on board, and we are all provided with inflated goatskins. Imagine me commanding a penny steamboat, carefully embracing a thing like a corpulent black pig! We are far too late in attempting this job and the risk is considerable, so it isn't a picnic, and all our private gear has been sent ashore."

" *11th September.*—SECOND CATARACT.—Yesterday was an unsuccessful day. We were nine hours actually in the cataract, and I am tired, for nerves and wits were strung to the highest pitch, and the poor old *Nassif Kheir* is rather a wreck. 5 p.m.—River falling fast and we can't be blamed if we fail to pull the ship over dry land. The fault will lie at the door of the home authorities."

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*" 12th September.—SECOND CATARACT.—*Great success yesterday. We managed to get over the gate that was beating us and got two miles further up the river. The 10th was a most exciting day. We started early to cross one bad gate, with Sir Evelyn Wood and a brilliant staff to watch the struggle from the shore. Everything went well at first and we were pulled up with the help of a little steaming without bumping very many rocks on the way. At last we reached this gate with a torrent running through it and jagged rocks behind and on both sides of a narrow channel of safety."

*16th September.—SECOND CATARACT.—*Had to leave off suddenly and haven't had a moment to write to you since, and now here we are, having worked our way steadily up to the foot of the Great Gate which we are to try to-day. It is a dangerous business and I have volunteered to go over the cataract in the steamer, taking six men (also volunteers) with me. I couldn't do less, could I? for she is my own little ship after all, so you mustn't mind."

*" 18th September.—SECOND CATARACT.—*At last we are nearly at the end of our difficulties here, for we have passed every gate, sixteen in all, and have now only one small one between us and the open river. We are alongside the bank now and repairing damages, for we knocked a hole in the poor little ship yesterday at the last gate, which would seem unlucky only that we have by the merest shave missed losing her altogether just six times since we started. The strain has been rather exhausting, but there is heaps to be done, and we must push on for Dongola as soon as possible, with four more cataracts to negotiate on the way."

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CHAPTER XXVII

MORE LETTERS FROM THE CATARACTS

" *September 29th.*—SEMNEH CATARACT.—After the Second Cataract we went on to Sarras, eighteen miles without a cataract, which was refreshing, but after that we had to run our nose into the nearest soft place, build a temporary dock, by which we got the ship's bows high and dry, and patch up a most disastrous leak. Two days later we were able to start again and got over another small cataract by the skin of our teeth, and on the third day we got over another which was pretty nasty. We started well and got safely through the boiling water at the foot of the gate with hawsers manned by six hundred men towing us along the bank and the ship steaming full speed. When we came to the full rush of water we hung for nearly three quarters of an hour unable to make an inch and were nearly swept into the high rocky cliffs that formed the bank. But inch by inch we gained ground and came steadily up to the point where I knew the greatest danger lay, for a strong current rushed round it, and if our bows were swept away from the land we should have turned straight across the current instead of facing it and so gone broadside on to a ridge of rocks three feet above the water and six feet across. Well, we *were* swept round ; I had to cut away two out of our three hawsers and trust to one holding us, and like a flash we went down the cataract broadside on and swept by a miracle over (or through) a ridge of sunken rocks, just clearing the ones I mentioned before. The ship was laying over all the time till we could hardly keep our footing on deck. At last our one hawser tautened again and slowly our head was pulled straight to the stream with a desperate strain on the hawser, and there we were in a raging torrent with rocks on both sides, and astern of us only boiling water

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and more rocks with one little channel through them barely the width of the ship. If the hawser carried away we should go broadside on to the rocks. Six times we struggled by dint of hauling and steaming to the top of the cataract, and six times we were swept back. The last time we struck a sunken rock and broke up our port paddle, and then I felt that the hawser had gone, but I couldn't see where, and I feared the poor old *N. K.* had made her last trip. Then to my amazement when we made one more try we got over, and in half an hour found ourselves safely tied up to the bank with Commander Hammill saying, 'Well, my dear Poore, I am very glad to see you again, for I never expected to.' "

" *October 2nd.*—ON THE WAY TO DONGOLA.—My writing is bad, for in our struggle with the cataracts I have knocked pieces off most of my fingers and am going about with both hands bandaged. Old Hassan, the interpreter, came to me when our fight with the Semneh Cataract was over and said, 'Look, Captain, all our beard turn grey.' "

" *October 7th.*—ON THE WAY TO DONGOLA.—I am scribbling this perched up on the wooden awning of the *N. K.*, where I seem to have spent all my days from dawn to dark since we left W. Halfa a month ago. It has been a long month, and sometimes I have felt so old and worn out after the strain of a long and anxious day that I want to sit still and think of nothing. It seemed glorious work at first, but I have changed my mind now and never want to see another cataract as long as I live after this job is finished. It may be very nice for people in good steamers, but I have to be all the time scheming and inventing a way of getting this poor old barky over each one till I am pretty nearly sick of it. Some of the river is very pretty, with mountains rising from the bank, where there are little patches of golden sand and here and there a date grove. A few rocky islands and a strip of tumbling water improve the scenery but turn my hair grey. *Later.*—Just got off a sandbank, but a sandbank is a luxury after all the rocks

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we have bumped lately, and now we are at the foot of our next gate."

"October 12th.—Arrived at Dongola two days ago and I thanked God.* We had a most enthusiastic reception and now I am going on to Merawi and as far up as I can get, with Sir Charles Wilson, R.E. (whose mission is chiefly political), on board."

"25th October.—ON THE WAY TO MERAWI.—I must tell you about the Mudir of Dongola. He is a very wide-awake lunatic, and, I should think, more far-seeing than most sane people who have an eye to the main chance. His great idea is that he is the head of the whole expedition, and that all of us, from Lord Wolseley down to the smallest drummer boy, are at his beck and call. He is humoured to the top of his bent, because his word is all-powerful up here, and at present we are rather in his hands, having only one regiment and one hundred and fifty Mounted Infantry here. As it is he reigns over us, and stores and provisions are coming in by tons every day, but should he turn huffy and stop the sale of corn and cattle not a thing could we get for love or money. I shall be glad when we have made our footing good, for this state

* *Times* special correspondent, October 10th, 1884: "Nothing could have been more opportune at the present moment, when the minds of the population are excited by rumours of the approach of an army of the Mahdi, than the arrival of H.M.S. *Nassif Kheir* to-day. As she steamed up to Dongola amid the cheers of the troops a great effect was produced among the people, who crowded down to the bank at the news of her approach, and there has been a visible change of attitude in the bazaar. The danger of steaming up hundreds of miles of rapids studded with rocks and obstructions can only be appreciated by those who have made the journey. The *Nassif Kheir* was hauled up the rapids of Semneh, Ambugol and Tanguor by three hundred men" (there must have been three thousand at the Great Gate at Wady Halfa), "and steamed the rest of the distance. Over and over again she had the narrowest escapes of being wrecked, but thanks to the care and good management of her commander and crew she was got through without serious mishap. The appearance of the white ensign at this remote point in Africa is a great feat.

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of things is rather maddening. On the afternoon of my arrival I went with General Stewart and five of the staff to be presented to "His Excellency." When we arrived the Mudir was praying (he always prays on these occasions). This time he prayed for half an hour while we twiddled our thumbs. Then he appeared; we rose, doffed our hats and grovelled. The General was permitted to touch his hand, but the remainder of us had not that honour. After seating himself he permitted us to be seated. Said the General, 'This is Captain Poore, who commands the steamer which arrived this morning. Allow me to present him to your Excellency.' H.E. looked straight in front of him and told his beads! You can imagine my wrath. The reception over, we retired with deep bows, and first I bubbled over with indignation and then I laughed at the absurdity of it all till I nearly had hysterics. Next day the quartermaster came down to me and said he thought 'one o' them Pashas' was coming on board. There was my friend with Colonel Colville (the latter to take care of *me*, I presume). H.E. bustled up to the gun-platform, had the gun explained to him, said he didn't think much of it, informed me that it must be removed and a stronger platform made to mount one of his own brass pop-guns. When this was done he would bring his soldiers on board and proceed to Merawi to fight the rebels. Apparently I, the brave and good Senior Naval Officer at Dongola, and C. in C. of H.M.S. *Nassif Kheir*, was to be dispensed with! Next he went down below and poked about in my cabin, thought it would do nicely for him, asked if I had any photographs to show him, and seemed to find the emphasis of my negative unnecessary. Then he sent for his astrological machine (which I covet) and explained that he could by its aid tell what anyone in any part of the world was thinking about. I trust he divined *my* thoughts, for he very soon departed, saying he thought the *N. K.* was a nice steamer and would suit him very well. Next day he very nearly did come, but, thank goodness, the stars were unpro-

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pitious and he decided to wait, and merely prophesied that we should all have our throats cut by the rebels at Merawi. Just before this he had reviewed the English troops and they marched past and saluted! It is the funniest bit of diplomacy I have yet seen. He makes heaps of money out of us, for all provisions, etc., are bought through him and he simply says, 'I have had no money for three days; I can't buy any more provisions unless you give me £2,000, and he gets it.'*

From the middle of October, 1884, until January 10th, 1885, the *Nassif Kheir* was kept busy running between Hannek, at the head of the Third Cataract, and Korti with detachments and stores.

"*January 4th, 1885.*—Now I am struggling up from Debbeh to Korti with a heavy load and towing two heavy boats. There are now so many lieutenants up here senior to me that my chance of promotion isn't too good. I really don't know what the Nile Expedition would have done without this old tub, and I trust an ungrateful country will recognise her commander's valuable services. A pension as well as promotion would be a gracious acknowledgment, but one or the other would be thankfully received."

* *Times* correspondent, December 20th, 1884: "The gentle but firm pressing back of the Mudir into his proper place—albeit with honours bestowed on him for what he had accomplished—has been well done by Lord Wolseley, and on their final interview between the two in Dongola it was evident more than on any previous occasion that the Mudir was acknowledging even to himself that he had found a master."



Photo. by G. West and Son, Southsea

COMMANDER RICHARD POORE
(Naval Brigade Nile Expedition)
1885

FROM KORTI TO GUBAT—AND BACK

CHAPTER XXVIII

FROM KORTI TO GUBAT—AND BACK

"*January 9th.*—Hope to be relieved of my command to-morrow and join the Second Division of the Naval Brigade. We have been running night and day, and it is always 'Glad to see you, Poore. What have you brought and when will you be ready to start again?' However, I expect to meet the N.B.'s boats presently, go on to Korti with them, and thence across the desert to Metemmeh, where Gordon's steamers ought to be. My baggage, bed and all, is limited to forty pounds, so, as your letters weigh at least a quarter of that, they must, I regret to say, be left behind."

"*27th January.*—GAKDUL WELLS, SUDAN.—Got here yesterday after a long and thirsty camel ride of one hundred miles of desert, and to-morrow we go on to Metemmeh. We only heard of the hard fighting at Abu Klea (in which the First Division of the Naval Brigade took part) after we started from Korti."

"*February 1st, 1885.*—GUBAT, NEAR METEMMEH.—Well and happy, with heaps to do. We came on yesterday expecting an attack every minute, but nothing more exciting than an occasional interchange of shots with prowling Arabs happened. I once wanted to have an experience of desert life, but I find I don't like getting only two pints of water *per diem* and entirely dispensing with washing. I have lived in my clothes and boots for eight days and nights—up at 4.30 a.m., load camels, have breakfast (short commons, too), start at dawn and march till dusk; then supper and to bed, expecting to be demolished by Arabs before dawn. News of the fall of Khartoum reached us to-day—a bad business indeed, and for ourselves the loss of two steamers is serious, for we are left with only two of

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the very shakiest penny boats, one of which has just gone up the river with Lord Charles Beresford* to rescue the crews of the two others, and I am here in command of only fifty bluejackets. I sleep just outside poor Sir Herbert Stewart's hut. He is desperately bad."†

"13th February.—A convoy came in from Korti yesterday while I was up the river having a little skirmish in my small penny steamer, and when I got back I was quite thankful to find General Buller and the greater part of the Royal Irish had at last arrived, for we have been for nineteen days without a sign from Korti. A mail came with them, but not a line for me from anyone. I've been a month without letters now."

"18th February.—ABU KLEA WELLS, BAYUDA DESERT.—Well and flourishing and more to do than ever, for Lord Charles does run his second in command about and no mistake. But I like it and the work immensely. My good luck has come all together. The day before we left Gubat I had a telegram from my mother to tell me of my promotion (4th February, 1885) sent over with important despatches, and in the same telegram she tells me that a distant cousin, a poor crippled old lady whom I sometimes went to see when I was in London on leave, has died and left me £4,000! Everyone here is so nice about my pro-

* *Times*, January 12th, 1885: "A considerable amount of sympathy is expressed with Commander Hammill, R.N., who, having rendered invaluable services in surveying the cataracts and generally in connexion with the work of river transport has now been shelved by the appointment of Lord Charles Beresford to command the Naval Brigade. It is understood that Commander Hammill has refused to act as second in command or to succeed Lord C. Beresford as Naval A.D.C. to Lord Wolseley. The feeling in the Navy is stronger because Captain Bedford, who organised the Nile gunboat service, has been superseded by officers sent out from England. It is regrettable that, even in favour of an officer of undoubted ability like Lord C. Beresford, the services of naval officers of equal ability and greater local experience gained during the hardest part of the campaign should have been slighted at the moment of decisive action."

† Mortally wounded at Abu Klea and lingered three weeks.

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motion and they all call it 'well earned,' which is very satisfactory."*

Though his comrades at Gubat welcomed Lieutenant Poore's promotion to Commander, it is not to be supposed that all the three hundred and seven lieutenants over whose heads he passed could feel equally enthusiastic. Many of them were probably ignorant of the fact that his claims for promotion were not based merely on his inclusion in the Naval Brigade attached to Sir H. Stewart's column which crossed the Bayuda Desert to Gubat. It was mainly due to his services on the Nile between March, 1884 (when he went up with his captain to make a survey of the river from Assouan to Wady Halfa), and January 8th, 1885, that he mounted his third stripe just before he had completed nine years as a lieutenant. But even with so much strenuous service to his credit as was represented by the negotiation in an ancient excursion steamer and under circumstances of peculiar difficulty and danger of hundreds of miles of cataracts and rapids deemed impassable at the season, he might not have been rewarded with promotion had not the regrettable loss at Abu Klea of Lieutenant Pigott removed an officer of exceptional capacity and character who was senior to himself.†

* When these two pieces of good news reached Mr. Poore he thought it in the highest degree unlikely that the force to which he belonged would ever see England again.

† Lieutenant Poore had been mentioned in despatches for good work at, and after, the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882. He had been one of the small party who swam ashore from the *Invincible* and spiked the guns of Fort Mex.

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"*March 8th, 1885.*—KORTI.—Got in very thirsty and tired yesterday evening, and last night I slept without my boots on for the first time since January 21st, and my feet were so cold. Now I am comparatively clean, and I should feel fairly respectable if there wasn't half a gale of wind blowing clouds of dust over everything. I slept in a tent last night for the first time since we left here, and found it so stuffy that I rolled myself up in a blanket and lay on the ground outside. I must go back a bit and tell you how things happened. It was on January 30th that we (Second Division) reached Abu Klea on our way to Gubat. The battlefield was a most gruesome sight. One poor little fellow not more than twelve years old was lying under a bush with his hands under his head looking as if he was asleep. We pushed on the same night, hearing we should have to fight our way on to Metemmeh (which, by the way, we never took. Gubat was our headquarters). We had two guns (R.A.) and about four hundred of the Camel Corps—not enough to do large fighting with, particularly as we had a convoy of provisions to protect. Everyone was very glad to see us next day at Gubat, as their stores were nearly exhausted. On the 1st we got the news of the fall of Khartoum and the loss of the two steamers, which put us in a very awkward position. Lord Charles started at noon with one of the two remaining steamers, leaving me in charge of the other half of the Naval Brigade. Someone had to be left, as we did not know when we might be attacked, or whether we might have to attack Metemmeh in self-defence, but I did *not* like being left behind."*

* Of the officers who started from Korti with the First Division of the Naval Brigade Lieutenants Pigott and de Lisle were both killed at Abu Klea. Lieutenants Van Koughnet and Poore, of the Second Division, arrived at Gubat fit for service, but the former was wounded while accompanying Lord Charles Beresford on his expedition to the rescue of the steamers disabled between Gubat and Khartoum. These two steamers had been sent down from Khartoum by Gordon to meet the relieving force at Gubat, and were manned by Gordon's faithful troops, supplemented by a detachment of the 35th. It was disastrous that no British officer on board these

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“ Lord Charles came back on the 3rd (February), and after that we used to go up and down the river on foraging expeditions and shoot people and be shot at. This went on till the 11th when Buller came in with six companies of the Royal Irish. The 13th was spent in destroying everything we could not carry on our limited number of very weak camels, spiking the steamers' guns and destroying their machinery, and on the 14th we started off at daylight for Howaiat Wells. Much to our surprise we passed through the belt of thick bush twelve miles from Metemmeh without seeing a soul, though a party of convoyed sick and wounded had been attacked there the previous day. Got to Howaiat at noon on the 15th and entrenched ourselves there. On the 16th at dusk the enemy opened fire on us from some hills commanding the Abu Klea Wells and made us spend a most uncomfortable night and following morning, when they brought up a field-gun which the R.A. soon silenced. I do not like being shot at all night, and it cost us thirty killed and wounded with nothing to show for it. We remained at Abu Klea till the 23rd when, camels having been sent from Gakdul, we started off at dusk on our march and passed through a nasty series of rocky passes where we could have been knocked to pieces if they had only been held by a few well-led men. At midnight we reached the open desert, felt safe, and slept soundly. General Buller was asleep the instant he lay down and never stirred till

boats could speak Arabic, and our force had to rely upon the services and the good faith of a Greek interpreter. This man was responsible for informing the British O. C. that Gordon had been done to death and that the Mahdists were in overwhelming force. In this connection I may mention that Major Kitchener, Major Schäfer, and Lieutenant Julian Baker, proficient Arabic scholars with exceptional knowledge of the tribes of the Sudan, *were all retained at Korti*. Major Kitchener had actually gone as far as Gakdul Wells with the First Division of the Expeditionary Force, but was recalled thence to Korti! Months later Major Kitchener said to my husband when they were talking over this incident, “ Never mind. I shall come back here some day and finish this business.” He did finish it—in 1898.

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we had to be off again in the morning. We neither met nor saw anything of the enemy beyond a few of their scouts who came up to us during the midday halt and fired a few shots, but did no damage. And that was the last we saw of them.*

"A very thirsty, fagging march brought us to Gakdul on the 26th. There weren't enough camels, and I preferred to march with my men, but a long course of bad water and scanty food had made me very seedy between Abu Klea and Gakdul. However, there was an enterprising Greek at Gakdul who had brought over a couple of camel-loads of jam, etc., from Lord knows where, so I laid in a small stock of jam at five shillings a pot, cocoa-and-milk at six shillings a tin, two tins of soup at six shillings, and got a bottle of whiskey for ten shillings. The craving I had for something sweet was extraordinary, and I lived on jam and cocoa for three days and had a glass of grog before my bedtime pipe, and now I am quite fit again. We left Gakdul on the 28th and arrived here yesterday (March 7th) and now I am on my way down to see if we can raise the poor old *Nassif Kheir*, which has been sent to the bottom by my successor. They talk of another expedition to Khartoum after the summer, but I can't see what would be gained. If we take Khartoum we must hold it if we are to make our power felt in this country, and we should need a huge army to keep the communications open. If the Mahdi is coming to Egypt we can wait for him at Halfa, with good water communications and easy routes for reinforcements and stores, and fight him on our own ground. If he doesn't advance his prestige is gone."

There was, of course, no immediate sequel to this expedition, and after two months of trying river work,

* Major Kitchener told Commander Poore some months later that only eight hours after the departure of the British from Abu Klea Wells the whole of the Mahdi's force attacked our deserted defences at that place. What their numbers were one cannot guess; our force was barely twelve hundred men of all arms and ranks. It was a very near thing.

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which included salvage and surveying, Commander Poore was invalided home with fever and dysentery. On his way down the river he received a one-word telegram from me in reply to his request that my father would now sanction our engagement. "The answer was in the affirmative."

All this time I had heard but twice of Mr. Poore from friends in Egypt. A letter from Mr. Pollen contained a glowing account of his cataract-climbing in September, 1884, but the writer was shortly after laid low with enteric and invalided home. My brother-in-law, Massie Blomfield, wrote later: "A certain lieutenant, not unknown to you, seems to be covering himself with glory." But it was cruelly hard that I should not have been permitted to tell my friends and acquaintances that the Lieutenant Poore whose portrait appeared with that of his little steamer in the *Graphic* was *my* property, and I am sure the kind Dean of Limerick (Dean Bunbury, who succeeded my father as Bishop in 1899) would never have said what he did when the news of the fall of Khartoum reached England had he known of my personal stake in the relieving expedition. "Now those poor fellows at Gubat will be cut to pieces before they can recross the desert to Korti" were his doleful words, and I, frantic with suspense and misery at the moment, turned upon this very reverend and good friend and cried vehemently: "Mr. Dean, I *hate* you." I did not apologise in spite of his horrified face, but three months later when he congratulated me on my engagement *he* apologised to *me*.

PART III

A COMMANDER'S WIFE, 1885—1890

CHAPTER XXIX

THE REWARD OF OBSTINACY

OUR prospects now looked bright enough, for my father had given his consent to our being definitely and publicly engaged. "But," added the Bishop, "there must be no talk of marriage." This was somewhat disconcerting, but I had gained the outer lines of fortification and sat tight.

In early July Commander Poore returned to England in the hospital ship *Ganges*. The long strain and hardship combined with persistently recurring attacks of Indian fever had put him on the sick-list, and when he reached Limerick he was looking thin and pulled down. A week or two later the annual migration to Parknasilla took place, but we two stopped on the way at Mitchelstown Castle, in Cork, with Anna, Countess of Kingston, a cousin of my father's. Hers was a beautiful house, and it was full of beautiful things, for her second husband, Mr. Webber, was a connoisseur and a judicious buyer of china and old Italian furniture. But my feelings were hurt at Mitchelstown by finding Commander Poore regarded as a *quantité négligeable*. Unimportant civilians were sent into dinner before him, and I had my first experience of that to which later I became accustomed—the inexhaustible ignorance of

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inland people concerning the Senior Service. That I myself had been equally unenlightened less than three years previously did not occur to me, and Commander Poore, more inured and far more philosophical, was much amused by my newly-acquired professional snobbishness.

One day some of us went to lunch with Lord and Lady Doneraile, and we saw and heard the pet foxes which it was the old gentleman's delight to keep. He told us that the wild foxes would come down at night and call upon their captive cousins, one of whom was actually treated like a lap-dog and accompanied him when he drove out—a somewhat odoriferous neighbour. Alas! poor Lord Doneraile came to his tragic end only two years later through being bitten by one of these strange pets of his. His coachman was also bitten, and, as the fox was proved to be mad, both master and servant went to Paris to be treated by Pasteur. The coachman, who submitted to the cure at the Institut and carried out all directions to the letter, recovered. Not so Lord Doneraile, who paid for his carelessness with his life.

Our "obstinacy," being now transformed (through a persistency favoured by the Fates) into "constancy," was after all to be rewarded. My father's reluctance to permit our marriage faded away as he became better acquainted with Commander Poore, and our wedding day was fixed for September 21st. We had some delightful weeks together at Parknasilla before business called the bridegroom-elect to London, whence he was to return to Kerry a few days before

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the wedding. Suddenly Captain R. O'B. Fitzroy asked him to go with him as commander of the *Active*, flagship of a training squadron of four corvettes commissioning on September 21st ! So good an offer could not be rejected, and, though the news threw us at Parknasilla into great confusion, my father mercifully decided as we wished, and, since it was not possible for Commander Poore to return to Kerry, consented to our marriage taking place in London on the 14th.

Just then the Commodore (Captain Fitzroy) chanced to see the announcement of our approaching marriage in the *Morning Post* and wrote a characteristic letter to his commander :

" DEAR POORE,—I see you are engaged to be married. Hope you are still of the same mind as regards coming with me. Remember I shall require the commander to be on board all day and every day, so if you wish to get married you must do so in the *dinner-hour*.*

" Yours sincerely,
" R. O'B. FITZROY."

Commander Poore replied by telegram :

" Personal considerations in no way affect service ones. Join ship September 15th."

It was literally true that personal considerations were put entirely on one side rather to my dismay, but it was good training.

Of course my trousseau was not ready, but as I had firmly refused the offer of a big wedding with its train

* Between noon and 1.15 p.m., when no work is done on board His Majesty's ships.

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of bridesmaids and other concomitant glories there was so much the less to countermand. It was on September 10th that Commander Poore's explanatory telegram reached Parknasilla, and on the following day my father and Lily and I set off for England. We slept that night at Mallow and next day proceeded direct to London, arriving there very early on a Sunday morning after a vile crossing. I cannot now be sure whether I was more pleased or disconcerted to find Commander Poore waiting on the platform at Euston, for I was tired and dirty and painfully aware of my travel-stained appearance. Much had still to be arranged before the morrow when at 11 a.m. we were to be married at St. Augustine's, Queen's Gate. I had no wedding finery, so I had decided to be married in a new black and white gown ; but Lady Poore strongly objected to black, and in the end I was led to the altar in a dark green velvet brocade of Rosy's ! Upon my head I wore a *bonnet* to match, enlivened by a cherry-coloured aigrette, and I do not suppose I ever looked worse in my life ; indeed, I cannot but feel that only the cheerful firmness of his admirable best man, Lieutenant Francis H. Pollen, R.N., induced the bridegroom to accept so unpromising a partner as myself. The close-fitting sleeves designed for Rosy's slender arms were tight to painfulness, and at the earliest possible moment I peeled off the green velvet and robed myself thankfully in the cool and easy black and white.

The first event of my married life was the paying of a visit to my husband's naval agents, Hallett's

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where I learned to write a cheque in my new name. Then we went shopping together, and Dick bought me a penny account-book which I faithfully promised to use.

Next day we went down to Portsmouth, where the *Active*, in complete disarray, lay alongside the dockyard. It was an odd sort of honeymoon, for my husband was off at five o'clock every morning and did not get back before seven p.m., and the days were long and empty for me. For five solid hours on the 20th, a Sunday, we sat making out watch, quarter and station bills for the commissioning of the ship on the morrow, and I was proud when I heard that my help had been of use. By that time, however, I was far away, for my husband went on board on the Sunday night, and I, feeling very small and forlorn, set off next morning for London, where a cousin had lent me her house for a week. Almost everyone I knew was away, and I was as bored and solitary as a prisoner, for, belonging as I did to the mid-Victorian period when independence in girls was discouraged, I had never had to find my way about London alone. Indeed, I had much to learn. Somehow the days passed, and when I returned to Portsmouth the *Active's* commissioning was so far advanced that Dick was beginning to see daylight, and we managed to enjoy what little leisure he had without looking too far ahead. This art of living in the present is one that sailor's wives should lose no time in acquiring.

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CHAPTER XXX

PARTINGS AND MEETINGS

ON October 5th the ship went round to Portland. I saw her leave Portsmouth Harbour and mournfully departed for London, escorted to the station by Lieutenant Charles E. Anson,* under whose care I had previously bought a large and unwieldy housekeeping purse at Charpentier's. I was fully determined to be a frugal and methodical housewife.

Seven months passed before I saw my husband again, the greater part of which I spent in rooms in an old house, long ago demolished, just opposite the Brompton Oratory. My mother-in-law, who lived not far off, was very good to me, and with practical kindness combined the very essence of sympathy, support, and affection; but I was often depressed enough. One letter a fortnight from my husband cruising in the West Indies was the very most I could hope for, since the Training Squadron, composed of sailing ships, was commanded by a past master in the management of masts and yards whose pleasure it was to keep at sea.

Before settling down in my rooms I paid a short visit to my husband's cousin, Miss Marianne North, exploratory botanist and flower painter, in her flat in Victoria Street. Her "Recollections of a Happy Life" showed her at her best and happiest. Her deafness and ill-health saddened her later years. To me she

* Rear-Admiral C. E. Anson.

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was very kind, but while I was with her she spent almost every moment of daylight in flower painting, grudging even the few minutes necessary for her meals. Great botanists and nurserymen visited and consulted her, bringing with them rare flowers to have their portraits painted, and one day on returning from a shopping expedition I was told that the Emperor of Brazil was with her in the drawing-room. There was to my mind something interesting and bizarre in the idea of an Emperor in a Victoria Street flat approached only by many flights of steep stone stairs.

My greatest pleasure during that winter of 1885—86 was derived from being a member of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's choir. He chose voices that were fresh and tuneful rather than those of older and more experienced musicians, which are often harsh or *défraîchi* in tone, and we all regarded our leader with so much affection as well as admiration that when he suggested additional practices at inconvenient hours in the recesses of Bloomsbury we put aside every consideration of convenience and flew to his bâton. Often I would return alone by omnibus at a late hour and through a blinding fog to my rooms in Brompton Road, but with the inspiring music of Dvorák ringing in my ears I felt I had not paid too dearly for the pleasure. Besides, I took a certain pride in the discovery that I could look after myself.

In February my father and Lily were to come over to England to spend a month or two at Penzance, where I was to join them, but Mr. Gladstone spoilt our plans by desiring the Irish bishops to consider in congress

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assembled one or other of his many destructive schemes, and my father was therefore unable to leave Ireland. No representations by himself or his colleagues would have had the slightest influence upon the man who had disestablished and disendowed the Church in Ireland, and my father knew it, but he was in honour bound to bear his part in what he recognised as a congress *pour rire*. So I went alone to Penzance and found much less than the sunshine I had anticipated, but received both kindness and hospitality from the great clan of Bolitho, with members of which I spent several weeks. When I left them the moment fixed for the return of the Training Squadron was at any rate perceptibly nearer. I awaited the great day at Portsmouth, and no one who realises that only the meetings of sailors with their wives make the partings endurable will need to be told how impatiently I waited, how I reviled the contrary and blessed the favourable winds, and how the desert of Portsmouth lodgings blossomed like a garden of roses when the commander of the *Active* finally entered the somewhat dingy portals of No. —, High Street.

Though receiving his commander's ungrudging admiration, Commodore Fitzroy was undeniably an exacting chief, blaming freely and praising rarely, and if my husband had acted upon the advice of Sir Joseph Fayrer he would have taken a few months' rest after the Egyptian campaign instead of plunging into as strenuous a job as could well be imagined. But he had at any rate a welcome ten days of leave in May, and I do not know which of us enjoyed the holiday at

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Sea View most. We had still so much to say, so much leeway to make up, and returned unwillingly enough to Portsmouth when his brief spell of idleness was over.

It seemed to both of us that I might just as well live in the country during the *Active's* next cruise, and our choice fell upon Lyndhurst as a desirable spot for me to settle down in. There I found a cottage which was modestly comfortable, and there I was left when the Squadron prepared for sea. The neighbourhood possessed some family associations, as Cuffnells had been owned by my husband's father before it was sold in the 'fifties to Mr. Hargreaves. Lady Margaret Lushington, who lived close by, had been as a girl the friend of my husband's aunts, and the Stevensons at Foxlease were friends of Lady Poore's; but of my new neighbours none were more neighbourly and none more interesting than Mr. and Mrs. Pitney Martin and their niece, Miss English, at Gascoigns, and Colonel and Mrs. Macleay and their daughter (now Lady Arbuthnot) at Glasshayes.

It was at Lyndhurst that Roger was born, and he was christened in the church made beautiful by Leighton's fresco. My eldest sister, Helen Powys, had died the very day my boy was born, and it was some time before I was told that her brave and gentle spirit had flown. Hers was not a long illness, though her health had been indifferent for some months, and it was a shock as well as a deep grief to me to find that I, to whom she had ever been so affectionate and helpful, should never see her again and never show her my little Roger. It was in some degree a consolation to have her son, my

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"faithful cavalier," John, then at Marlborough, for Roger's junior godfather, since it seemed to draw me even closer to the motherless boy who in his turn proved for the remainder of his short life so good a friend to mine.

My mother-in-law came to stay with me for the christening, and Captain W. H. Pigott, R.N., Roger's senior godfather, an old shipmate of my husband's, was also present. Indeed, the latter was supposed to be my husband by an unenlightened pew-opener, who caused us some embarrassment by insisting that he, *as the infant's father*, should sign the register!

Lyndhurst proved in many respects a well-chosen camping ground, but it was not until I was on the point of leaving that my neighbours, generally speaking, discovered me to be both perfectly respectable and passably desirable as an acquaintance. There are great merits to be discerned in the caution exhibited by English people in such cases, but, accustomed as I was to the prompt manifestations of hospitality common in Ireland towards the families of English military officers quartered there, I found such coolness discouraging. My husband was, of course, at sea, a fact that should have served as a recommendation rather than a drawback to his wife.

When Roger was four months old the Training Squadron returned from the Mediterranean and I went off to Portland to welcome my husband. It was late when I arrived, but next morning I woke to see the four ships lying just inside the breakwater, and after breakfast took my way along the road leading to the landing-

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place, never for an instant supposing I should at such an hour meet anyone I knew. As I stood looking over the wall a dignified person stopped beside me. "How do you do, Mrs. Poore?" said the dreaded Commodore; "if I had known you were coming down you should have gone off to the ship in my boat." Overwhelmed with astonishment, I could scarcely stammer out my thanks, but I am sure I made it clear that no earthly consideration would have induced me to do, or dream of doing, such a thing. It was a Saturday morning, and the Commodore very evidently recognised my *bona fides*, for on meeting his secretary at the hair-cutter's later in the day he sent a message by him to the Commander to the effect that he would not be wanted on board till Monday morning. After enjoying this wholly unexpected piece of luck I returned to Lyndhurst to pick up my impedimenta in the shape of a very dignified nurse, a small red-headed baby, and a perambulator, all of which I presently transported to lodgings in Southsea.

It was dark when my husband reached Elphinstone Road on the evening of our arrival and the baby had long been in his cot, but even the dignified nurse regarded the occasion as one of exceptional importance, and he was brought down to be introduced to his father with all possible ceremony. The lighted gas, however, proved a novelty far more attractive than his unknown parent, and upon it, and it only, he fixed the gaze of a pair of unblinking blue eyes. "Do you mean to tell me," said Dick, "that that child doesn't know I am his father?" I reluctantly admitted this to be almost

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certainly the case. Nurse resented such amateur criticism of the precious baby's intelligence, and Roger, happily unaware of failure and gazing to the last at the gas, was removed to the nursery. I made his apologies and decided to wait a bit longer for the *rapprochement* which would certainly come as soon as my son should begin to interest himself in strange naval officers.

CHAPTER XXXI

VARIETY AND VICISSITUDES

DURING this short spell of domestic bliss we were invited to dine at Admiralty House, Portsmouth. Sir George Willes was then Commander-in-Chief, and I had heard so much of his sarcastic tongue and awe-inspiring manner that I trembled in my shoes as the evening approached. We were too early, and as we drove about the dockyard till we were sure the proper moment had arrived I held my husband's hand tightly and hoped passionately for the best. I have often wondered of late years whether any of the junior officers' wives who have dined with us at Sydney or Chatham have been half as terrified as I was that night in 1886. I earnestly hope not.

Lady Willes was all kindness, and Sir George was fortunately in so mild a mood that my anticipations were agreeably falsified. But he certainly was a tartar,

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and "standing up to" my husband's Commander-in-Chief when he said nipping things was an effort for which I had little taste. Once, at a later period, he asked me where I had "caught Poore." That made me really angry, and I said: "Perhaps if you will put your question more politely I will answer you." Sir George seemed to find this rather amusing and adopted my suggestion, but I was actually shaking with rage and fright. It is only fair to say that he was very hospitable, and as far as I was concerned he never went beyond the point of heavy chaff; but women guests at his parties had been actually reduced to tears by his bullying speeches, and all Lady Willes' tact and suavity could not atone for her husband's lapses into ferocity.

Our few weeks at Southsea were over all too soon, and when the Squadron began to prepare for a second cruise to the West Indies I returned to Lyndhurst. But I was allowed to see the ship off from Portland, and there in our lodgings I actually gave a tea-party to some of the Squadron's midshipmen—my old *Invincible* friends, who were doing such a strenuous course of seamanship as should have qualified them all to obtain "Ones." Mr. D'Oyly was in the *Active* and Mr. Hyde-Parker in the *Calyпсо*, Mr. Smyth and Mr. Osborne in the *Volage*, and Mr. Shakespear in the *Rover*, and I made a new friend in Mr. P. H. Colomb, of the *Active*, who, after passing through various official reincarnations while remaining my firm ally, materialised in 1911—15 as my husband's flag-captain at the Nore. That is one of the thoroughly satisfactory

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things about the Navy. No man is tied and confined to one unit as a soldier is bound, generally speaking, to his regiment, however beloved.* All executive naval officers have hitherto passed through the one mill at Dartmouth ; they are all emphatically of the same school, as much so as though they had all been at Winchester, Harrow, Rugby, or Marlborough, and their early traditions are identical. Then they are sent to sea in batches. Later on they go to college at Portsmouth or Greenwich. But during all their service they shift from squadron to squadron, three years in one ship, two or less in another, as circumstances dictate. Specialise as they will, they remain none the less members of the Navy as a whole, and from a submarine an officer may go to a battleship, thence to a cruiser or a destroyer, interchangeable, despite his distinguishing label of G. (gunnery), T. (torpedo), or N. (navigation). What will happen in the Naval Air Service, which is at present as fluid as it is volatile, and occasionally as intangible as the atmosphere in which it operates, who am I that I should prophesy ?

The day after my midshipmen's tea-party the Training Squadron sailed. I was allowed to go on board to say good-bye, and while my husband was out of his cabin I occupied myself in writing short pencil messages on the inner sheets of his official blotting-pad, so that he might find surprises as the days and months of our separation went by. I think this was my own

* The term *esprit de corps* has hitherto stood, in the Army, for *regimental unity* ; with sailors it has always meant the spirit of a *united Service*.

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invention, one I can recommend to other sailors' wives fond enough to adopt so innocent a method of bringing themselves unexpectedly to remembrance.

But very soon the gig came alongside and, with Mr. D'Oyly in charge, I went ashore heroically bent on keeping the stiffest of stiff upper lips as I had faithfully promised to do. I wanted a stiff upper lip when I got back late that evening to Lyndhurst, tired, sad, and chilled to the bone. Nurse gave me time to take my things off and then came to ask if I was not coming to the nursery. "Oh," I answered impatiently; "I don't want to see Baby to-night," for I felt that not even the nicest of babies signified just then. "Very well, 'm, as you please, of course; but he's not at all the thing." I started to my feet and flew to the nursery, and then followed twenty-four hours of such anxiety as perhaps only mothers of very small babies suffering from bronchitis can understand. Too young to know how to cough, the little fellow came near choking again and again. My landlady was the parish nurse, and all her skill was supplemented by the unflagging efforts of a nurse no longer dignified and a mother no longer careless. At last we were rewarded. Lying on his nurse's lap, swathed in flannel and reeking of camphorated oil, my little Roger watched with solemn, tired eyes while I spun the lid of his ivory powder-box on the polished surface of the nursery table. I do not know how long I had been spinning it, in the faint hope of giving him the pleasure this exhibition always afforded, when suddenly he smiled. "Thank God!"

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said Nurse. "I'm a poor woman, but I would have given a five pound note for that smile." And with the amazing power of recuperation peculiar to babies "from that hour he began to amend."

CHAPTER XXXII

TERRA FIRMA

I DO not know who suggested that the appointment of commander of the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert* (familiarily known as the *V. and A.*) would suit my husband. He was again cruising in the West Indies when the idea struck some friend of ours, and, as the yacht appointments are in the gift of the Sovereign, interest in obtaining them is, of course, indispensable. I confess to having pulled several strings with my own hand, but I need not have troubled, for Captain J. R. Fullerton,* Captain of the Queen's Yachts, personally recommended my husband to Queen Victoria. The appointment was announced on the very day of his return in the *Active*, although he only took up his duties in the following month—May, 1887. It was very exciting to meet him at Weymouth with the great news that we should be together for three whole years at the end of which he would be automatically promoted to post-captain, but for the first

* Now Admiral Sir John Fullerton.

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month there was so much to do, bewilderingly much for me after so long a period of quiet, that we had no real peace. Among other things I had to be presented at Court, to take a house (not, as we had hoped, well outside Portsmouth, but at Southsea) and to find servants, and I was so painfully inexperienced that I made mistakes enough, costly ones for poor people, to fill a chapter. The rent of our furnished house was out of all proportion to our modest income, so was my presentation gown, and so, it presently appeared, was everything, and I no longer contemplated my account-book with the pride and satisfaction it had given me in London and at Lyndhurst. We did not appear to be extravagant, but our scale of living was at fault, and only when we let our house for a couple of months to a rich manufacturer who considered Southsea a desirable spot in which to spend July and August did I breathe freely. For this period the Yacht was at Cowes, and I found rooms, unfashionable, of course, but quite suitable, at East Cowes.

In spite of my financial anxieties I had thoroughly enjoyed the early months of that summer. We met numbers of old friends and made new ones, we played lawn-tennis, danced a little, and bought a funny little sail-boat of two and a half tons, called the *Tub*, in which we had various exciting experiences in the Solent. We were ourselves the crew, and there were moments, due chiefly to the overbearing ways of the Ryde steamers, when we had to do all we knew to avert disaster. Sir George Willes was still Commander-in-

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Chief, with Sir John Hopkins as Admiral Superintendent ; Captain Compton Domvile commanded the *Excellent* and Captain Long the *Vernon*, and though we received and duly appreciated the hospitality of these our betters, we naturally found our friends among the junior ranks. Lieutenants C. L. Napier, Ethelston, Granville, W. L. Grant, C. Ottley, and Sir Robert Arbuthnot were on the junior staffs of these ships, and at the College there were quite a dozen acting subs. whom I had known either at Alexandria or while they were in the Training Squadron. But of these the greater number were badly bitten with the theatrical mania, and their spare hours, and some that could hardly well be spared, were spent in rehearsing musical comedy. I did not then understand as I do now how inevitably naval officers during the period following their time as midshipmen must lose much of their early attractiveness ere they put on the whole armour of the lieutenant. I sometimes felt at Portsmouth that my friends had given me up, but later on I discovered my mistake and realised how foolish I had been to expect any boy, even a midshipman, to grow up without some slight solution of continuity in character and ideals. The break in a chorister's voice is something like that gap. The chorister's friends almost hold their breath lest the white-washed imp should never sing so true and sweet in after life as he had done when his pure treble filled the cathedral aisles ; and I used to wonder whether those delightfully *naïf* and entertaining boys of 1883—86 would ever return to the old confidential footing. But one by one

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I have met them again as lieutenants and commanders, captains and even admirals, always with pleasure, often with satisfaction and pride.

CHAPTER XXXIII

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BEFORE we went to Cowes there occurred the Great Jubilee Review in the Solent. My husband was, of course, on board the *V. and A.* but, by good luck, our best man, Francis Pollen, then flag-lieutenant to Lord John Hay at Devonport, turned up on the eve of the Review in his Commander-in-Chief's yacht, the *Vivid*, and asked my sister-in-law and myself and anyone else we wished to bring with us to see the show from his temporary command. He was unable to promise us much to eat, so we took with us some solid necessaries, such as a ham and a chicken pie, and repaired on board next morning. Just as the *Vivid* was casting off a mixed party of people who had failed to find the ships from which their passes had entitled them to witness the Review were bundled on board us by distracted officials. It was well we had that ham, for these unlucky derelicts were, of course, unprovided with food, and when there was nothing left but the bone Mr. Pollen bestowed cigars and whiskies and sodas upon those of his uninvited guests for whom no

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lunch was forthcoming. As a spectacle the Review cannot, of course, be compared with more recent naval displays, but it was a very great occasion, and I shall never forget the cheering of the men manning the yards on either side of the wide lane down which the Queen passed slowly in the *V. and A.*

Unless there have been drastic changes in the last five and twenty years a Royal Yacht is unlike any other ship, and, to say the truth, she is far less interesting, viewed from a naval standpoint. There is no mingling of rough and smooth, "good boys" and bad characters, in her ship's company. They are all good, blameless, and often smugly self-satisfied, and I could not detect any signs of that *esprit de corps* which animates the officers and crew of a ship in general service, for there was no competition and none of the effervescence or keenness which is always found in a "smart" ship, or one ambitious of becoming smart. The men of the *V. and A.* were not unlike the sailors in H.M.S. *Pinafore*, and most of her officers were pausing for rest after a period of strenuous service, or merely revelling in the social opportunities which their position afforded. The navigator was a very live man, since his responsibilities were great when the Yacht was at sea, and so, of course, was the captain, but the commander had not nearly enough to do, while the three subs. were only appointed for the six weeks which ensured their promotion, and these six weeks were spent at Cowes! For all but the months of July and August and during an occasional trip across the Channel the *V. and A.*'s officers lived on board the little

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old yacht *Royal George* lying perpetually at anchor in Portsmouth Harbour, half-way between the dockyard and Gosport. There were two lieutenants who put in two years for promotion, and if they were young men of means they had an excellent time ashore, turn and turn about. Neither watch-keeping nor navigation, torpedo nor gunnery, vexed their souls. But when Queen Victoria was on board officers and crew were every button on duty, for nothing short of perfection in dress and "deportment" as well as intelligence and aptitude would satisfy the Greatest Lady in the Land ; and all the officers knew it.

Indeed, as a rest-cure, two or three years in the *V. and A.* were wholly desirable, and it would ill become one who had reaped the advantages of so long a "stand easy" to complain of the monotony inseparable from it. The opportunity given to my husband of repairing the inroads made upon his health by the long spell of trying work in Egypt, a period succeeded so quickly by one of relentless activity in the Training Squadron, was invaluable, and I can never be too grateful for the surcease from overstrain which those three uneventful years afforded. And above all things he appreciated the fact that he was brought into actual touch with the Queen for whom at any time he would most cheerfully have given his life if such a sacrifice could have profited her anything.

I was naturally more an onlooker than an actor at Cowes, for I did not belong to the society which can afford to take its pleasures handsomely. The spectacle offered by the crowds of smart folk on the lawn of the

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Yacht Squadron garden interested and amused me, and such well-advertised faces as those of Lady Randolph Churchill, then a very picturesque young woman, and the celebrated Lady Cardigan needed no label. But merely looking at people to whose *monde* one does not belong soon palls, and I enjoyed our games of tennis at Northwood and the outings in the Commander's blue galley more than the occasional doses of gape-seed which punctuated Cowes week. One day when I had taken Roger and his nurse out in the boat I put them ashore on Cowes beach so that the baby might dabble his small toes in the almost tepid water. On returning to pick them up I found "Nannie" much excited and elated, for a party of strangers who had seen them land from a Royal Yacht's boat had concluded that the baby was a Royal infant and had inquired whether her charge was not "the infant Prince of Battenberg."* I cannot believe Nurse brought herself to disclaim the "greatness thrust upon" the baby. If she did not do so it must have made the inquirers very happy to think they had made the acquaintance of Queen Victoria's latest grandson.

My husband was dining on board the *V. and A.* one night with the Crown Princess of Germany, and I had gone early and bored to bed, when I was aroused to read a note brought by special messenger commanding me to a small informal dance on board the Yacht. I dressed with lightning speed, and it was lucky my husband had had the forethought to tell me not to wear

* Prince Alexander, born 1886.

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an evening gown, for all the Royalties were in high dresses. I confess I felt very shy when I arrived alongside, but Dick, who was on the look-out for me, took me straight to the Crown Princess, and her greeting was most kind. Soon I was flying round the deck with one of the lieutenants, who, to my dismay, danced the old *valse à deux temps*, dear to our Royal Family and detested by myself. Yielding to my protests, my partner mended his ways, reluctantly and much to my amusement, since I was quite certain he had but very recently adopted a step he would in less distinguished company have despised. It was very hot dancing in high dresses, and soon we all went to find cool drinks. Next me, leaning against the bulkhead of a deck cabin, was Princess Victoria of Prussia, a big girl, plain but well and strongly built. Her sister, now Queen Sophie of Greece, was smaller and better looking, and Princess Margaret was just a round little *backfisch* of fifteen. Presently Princess Victoria made an ejaculation, and, thinking she spoke to me, I faltered "I beg your pardon, ma'am?" "Oh," she said, "I didn't speak; I was only *gawsping*" (gasping). I felt rather officious and foolish, but Princess Louise, then Marchioness of Lorne, came to the rescue with some friendly remark and earned my lasting gratitude. After another dance or two the Crown Princess came and talked to me and suggested a turn on deck. Glad and proud I bore her company, and she told me that she knew very well how great a service my brother Bob (then at Sofia with Sir F. Lascelles) had rendered to Prince Alexander of Battenberg, lately Prince of Bulgaria. I was mystified,

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for, though I knew with what devotion my brother regarded that brilliant and most ill-fated Prince, I had never heard that he had been in a position to be of use to him. Nor do I know now what it was that Bob did, for he has kept his own counsel. Presently I ventured to ask the Crown Princess what sort of ruler Prince Ferdinand of Coburg was likely to make. "Oh," she answered, "he is, as you know, my cousin, but all I can say for him is that he is considered to be a very clever *entomologist*." The way in which the Princess threw out her pretty hands and put her dignified nose in the air as she said the word "*entomologist*" was delightful. Had she said Prince Ferdinand was a beetle rather than a beetle-hunter her expression and tone could not have been more contemptuous.

Later on we were invited to dine at Norris Castle, where the Crown Princess and her daughters were living, and, as there were no other guests, we sat one on each side of our hostess. She was talking of yachting and said how much one missed by being a bad sailor. I assented in heartfelt sympathy, and added that the worst part of being seasick was the humiliation it caused to the sufferer, as no seasick person could maintain his self-respect. "Quite so," said the Crown Princess. "I feel myself a worm, a contemptible creature, when I cross the Channel in rough weather." "Oh, no, ma'am," protested an obsequious Maid of Honour; "Not *you*, ma'am!" "But yes, Miss —, but yes, even *I*," mimicked the Princess; and I rejoiced to see that she recognised and rejected the implication that she was superior to the rest of humanity.

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I have always regretted that I never saw the Crown Prince, that noble specimen of Royal manhood whose life, had it been prolonged, would undoubtedly have been an example of all that was good to the people his son has bewitched. Long ago I heard a little story of the Royal Family of Germany which I have treasured. The Crown Prince and Princess were present at a Court Ball at Berlin not long after their marriage, and the very youthful bride came up to her mother-in-law in the course of the evening and asked: "Mamma, have you seen Fritz anywhere?" Queen Augusta, rigid and pompous stickler for etiquette, replied with intent to reprove that she did not know where H.R.H. the Crown Prince might be. Later on her son approached her and said with gentle malice: "Mamma, do you know where my little wife is?" Queen Augusta shrugged her celebrated alabaster shoulders (which unkind people said were false) and frowned as she disclaimed all knowledge of the Crown Princess's whereabouts. The stiffness of that German Court must have been petrifying or asphyxiating to anyone less courageous and sane than those two happy young people.

CHAPTER XXXIV

PARAMÉ

THE rest of our time at Portsmouth was uneventful. We were not rich enough to take advantage of the

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many possibilities such an appointment affords to people better endowed. We could have had plenty of leave, but it seemed more economical to remain fixed for the best part of our first two years at Southsea, much as we came to dislike our suburban surroundings and the dusty, wind-swept common. One day we discovered that even our modest way of living was costing more than we could afford, so we let the small house we had furnished (our second venture), my husband took up his quarters on board the *George*, and I, with Roger and the faithful and accommodating nurse who had succeeded the dignified one departed for Brittany. The month was April, and it was bitterly cold when we reached S. Malo and drove out along the shore to Paramé. A friend had found me a little thin-walled furnished villa with just the amount of comfort to be expected from a house rented at fifty francs a month. She had also engaged a sour-faced *bonne à tout faire* called Virginie, who was as honest as she was cantankerous. There were some small mats in the house, but not a single carpet, and not one of the few fireplaces was capable of holding more than a couple of minute logs of wood at a time. For two months we lived in that wretched little house, but the joy the perusal of my account-book gave me more than outweighed the inconvenience, the ugliness, the cold, and the creases in Virginie's temper, and when Dick came over to spend a few days with us he found us flourishing and contented.

At Southsea my husband had worked at French under my tuition; and in spite of the disadvantages

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under which he laboured through a blank ignorance of grammar of any kind, he had made some slight progress. It was worrying for me who had been liberally fed on grammar from the age of eight to seventeen to find that my pupil did not know what a part of speech meant, nor yet a case nor a tense, but his accent was good and his translations so funny that I used to stop tearing my hair and fall into helpless laughter over his "howlers." Two of these I still remember. In "Le Petit Chose," by Daudet, the young hero and his brother are described as living on an irreducible minimum of francs per week. The little budget they drew up contained the item *menus frais, deux francs*, and this he translated *fresh menus*, which was decidedly comic considering the poor boys' life of grinding economy. Again, when describing the New Year's gifts bestowed upon a fortunate child, he made of the phrase *une corbeille pleine de papillottes* (sweets twisted up in strips of paper) *a crow stuffed with butterflies*.

When the summer came bringing a crowd of bathers to the *plage* of Paramé we were lucky in finding a truly delightful old château two miles inland and half-way between S. Servan and Paramé. It was sparsely furnished, but for a very few pounds we hired a sufficiency of necessaries to render it habitable, and here I passed five happy months. My husband was with me for a good part of the time, and a party of cousins with their children came to us at La Rivière as paying—or I should say, sharing—guests for the summer holidays. My duties as a housekeeper were no sinecure, for we were two miles from a shop, and without a jolly

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little donkey, which trotted a mile in ten minutes, and his miniature dog-cart we could not have procured the necessaries of life. Sometimes I went into S. Servan on market days and bought chickens and fish, but most of my *fournisseurs*, lived at Paramé. There was the butcheress whose shop was far less refined than her manners, the *patissière* as attractive as her wares, and the provision merchant who tied up carrots in thin and brittle pale mauve paper with parti-coloured ribbons. One day I went to Paramé to buy pigeons from the pretty *patissière*. While I waited she wrung their necks in the backyard and then handed the birds to me across the counter in a paper bag through which the warmth of their poor little bodies penetrated ! It was a painful incident. Once I forgot to fetch the meat for dinner while my cousins were with us. Their donkey and ours were otherwise engaged, so I trudged into Paramé after lunch in the blazing August sun and returned with four kilos of raw veal in a rush basket.

There was a beautiful but neglected garden at La Rivière with a stone fountain in whose basin arum lilies, rooted under water, grew thickly, and there were standard apricots and peaches and melting " William " pears in the unpruned orchard. The house contained plenty of good rooms and deep cupboards, and we had a big cool *salon* with a parquet floor. The kitchen was vast, and at the top of the house was a great lobby providing space and wide tables for the two chattering ironers who followed on the heels of Mme. Buant, the laundress, and worked all Friday and Saturday. The farmer, his wife and three fat baby daughters in tight

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white caps lived just outside the garden wall, and from them we bought milk and potatoes and the thin pleasant cider of the country. I tried to keep poultry in our high-walled yard, where a pink-washed *colombier* reared its graceful cupola, but my own inexperience and the visitations of a mysterious and murderous reptile known locally as the *v'lan* militated against success, so I bought chickens for thirty-two or thirty-four sous apiece in S. Servan market instead.

Our *bonne*, Marie, was the wife of a Newfoundland fisherman, absent from April to October, a plain, clever, hot-tempered little woman from S. Nazaire who cooked admirably and served inelegantly the food I provided. Her *pigeons aux choux* were the perfection of bourgeois cookery; her coffee, produced from a battered tin coffee-pot, was a dream.

Throughout the summer holidays we drove daily into Paramé to bathe. It was the event of the day, but we also took long country or seaside walks, Dick fished for bass off the rocks, and nearly every evening we had delightful music from my cousins, Mrs. Hutchinson and Mrs. Hess. Each of us had a task to do before the bathing hour, and mine was the cleaning of the lamps (an office I cordially hated), for with only one *bonne* and two English nurses as the entire domestic staff it was incumbent upon us to help ourselves.

We actually gave a dance of seventeen couples one night. Mrs. Hutchinson made the *macédoines* for supper and Mrs. Hess the *mayonnaises*; Dick concocted the claret and cider cups, and music was provided by amateurs at the piano. Our "men" were for

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the most part pupils of Mr. Cowles, the well-known crammer then at Paramé, and we all danced with a will on the smooth parquet of our airy *salon*. The cost of this modest entertainment was just fifty francs, but no money could have bought the exquisite night, the perfumed garden with its shady *bosquets* and funny little summerhouses faintly illumined by Japanese lanterns, and the youthful gaiety of the company.

We hired *chars-à-bancs* and drove all the way one blazing hot day to Mont S. Michel. There we wandered by moonlight about the Mount of which Nature and the architecture of past ages have conspired to make one vast grey cathedral of columns, pinnacles and arches, and there, with her back to a stone pillar, Cecilia Hutchinson stood and poured out the full treasure of her beautiful voice in "Solvejg's Lied." Never before or since have its pathetic cadences so touched me. Its wailing notes were like a threefold cord woven of romance, magic and melancholy, a cord that tightened about our hearts and held us silent, spellbound. Next morning when we descended from our various "billets" to breakfast at Mme. Poulard's famous inn that kind and handsome woman asked us who had been singing in the moonlight, for the people in the village had thought it must be the voice of some angel come down from heaven to visit the Mount of St. Michael!

PART IV

A CAPTAIN'S WIFE, 1890—1903

CHAPTER XXXV

HALF-PAY IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE

IN October, 1889, we returned to Portsmouth lighter of heart and easier of pocket and fully determined to cut our coat henceforth according to our cloth. It was hardly a coat—something more like a monkey-jacket indeed—but it sufficed, and we never seriously regretted the exchange of a whole house with servants and the various unexpected calls upon our exchequer for five sunny rooms on the third and fourth floors of No. 11, Southsea Terrace. There we lived till our three years at Portsmouth were up, and it was there that Roger rose from petticoats to trousers. He was so slim at three and a half that his infinitesimal sailor suits were very becoming. They were made by a man in the *V. and A.*, and of course the little fellow sported the white badges, the nameless cap-ribbon of watered silk and the pumps, which were all the prerogative of Royal Yachtsmen. I had ordered two pairs of serge and one pair of fine cloth trousers, and the tailor brought them home in a pocket-handkerchief! “I’m sorry, ma’am,” he said, “if I’ve taken a liberty, but the cloth is so wide I just *had* to make two pairs of best trousers for the young gentleman.” King Edward, as Prince of Wales, had his first sailor suits made on

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board the Royal Yacht, and there is a legend that when the Queen was cruising these were washed and "ironed" on board. The Queen expressed her surprise that they were so beautifully done and sent for the blue-jacket who had been their launderer to compliment him on his handiwork. "How well they are ironed!" she said to the very stout and blushing sailor. "I did not know you had irons on board." "I don't iron them, your Majesty," explained the man; "I just sets on 'em when they're damp."

Roger was overjoyed to put on male attire, and when I came in one day I found him climbing the stairs after a round of visits undertaken quite independently of his nurse to show himself to the landlady and her husband, and not only to them but to everyone lodging in the house! He had knocked at every door, popped his head in and announced "I've got touzers"; for though he had been rather shy of strangers in his petticoated days, he relinquished this excessive modesty along with his starched skirts and his perambulator.

In May, 1890, my husband's appointment as commander of the *V. and A.* terminated and he was promoted to Captain. Now "the world was all before us," but half-pay limited our choice, and after some consideration we decided to return to France so that Dick should continue his pursuit of the language. We made a bad shot this time, and in our anxiety to avoid English people who would distract our minds from the study of French we chose a spot some miles inland from Dieppe where there was hardly a soul of any nationality to speak to. It rained for the best part of two months,

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and if we had not played battledore in the upstairs lobby of our dreary little furnished house, which proved to be the well-patronised club of every cat in the village, I, personally, should have succumbed to damp and *ennui*. Then, when it grew warmer and the rain stopped, we betook ourselves to Veules, a small seaside place sixteen miles west of Dieppe. There were no English people in our hôtel, but there was a great party of Russian artists besides the French visitors, and to these Russians we owed the social *agrémens* of our stay. The seniors were persons of distinction, residents in Paris and speaking French, as Russians can, in perfection. The juniors were rather wild-looking creatures who wore fanciful shirts tied at the neck with cords and tassels and spoke little but their native tongue. There was one lady of the party, a lovely Mme. Coquelin, clever and fascinating, round whose *samovar* the entire circle, often reinforced by ourselves, gathered after lunch. There was a M. Coquelin also, but he was not so interesting as his brilliant wife.

Bathing was, perhaps, the first and most important item in our day, and some of the Russians were fine swimmers and divers; but they all worked hard at their art, and, though ourselves supremely ignorant, we took a deep interest in their sketches. M. Lehmann and M. Rohmann (both from the Baltic provinces, hence their German names) were painters of repute, while M. Egoroff and M. "Michel," whose surname was unpronounceable, had both won the Prix de Rome. M. Egoroff volunteered to give me lessons, and I sat humbly by his side for many hours wrestling

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with the drawing and first wash of a well-filled farm-yard. I still have that unfinished sketch. It was very bad. After three lessons my master said he thought I should study still-life and suggested my beginning on *articles de cuir*. I thought he must mean boots or saddles, but he should have said *cuivre*, not *cuir*.

As we all sat at tea one afternoon on the lead-floored verandah a barrel-organ struck up a waltz in the street below. In two seconds the Russians were dancing, and in four I found myself whisked off my feet by a handsome giant from Odessa. Mme. Coquelin, to whom I can never be too grateful, called out "*trois temps*" as I flew past, and *trois temps* I kept, but I was like a dry leaf in a hurricane, turned and twisted, wafted and whirled hither and thither in a complicated and fascinating dance such as I have never seen, much less danced, before or since. "Brava" they cried when, panting, I escaped from M. Develle; but it would not have been "brava" but for Mme. Coquelin's timely hint.

One hot morning I came down to early breakfast on the same useful verandah clad in a sort of overall of pale pink gingham and wearing a large and shady, but very French, hat of rosy hue upon my head. "*Quelle aurore!*" exclaimed one of the younger artists; but he pronounced it *Quelle horreur*, and I must have looked more like an October sunset than a delicate dawn until M. Rohmann perceived and cut short my embarrassment by interpreting the friendly comment. The artists were very fond of Roger, whose

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funny French amused them. One of them, M. Roth, had picked him up one Sunday morning and perched him standing on his knee. Roger was unhappy, though proud to be so exalted, and vainly endeavoured to explain that his shoes were dirty and that he feared they would spoil M. Roth's *dimanche pantalon*. As none of the band of artists, except the two seniors, appeared to possess a garment answering to that description they were much entertained by this solicitude of which I had to be the interpreter.

The following winter I sent from London, by way of greeting, some commonplace Christmas cards to these kind holiday friends. To my surprise and pleasure they replied with a large and composite water-colour in which a typically Norman landscape was represented in grey monochrome by M. "Michel"; a tiny seascape of blues was M. Egoroff's contribution, and M. Rohmann added a head in Bartolozzi style purporting to be my own portrait in the hat of *Aurore*; but it was far more like Mme. Coquelin. That "Christmas card," as the artists called it, to which all their signatures were appended, is one of my treasures, and it has hung on more walls than I can count since I received it in 1890.

In those days, twenty-six years ago, the cost of living was everywhere 25 per cent. less than it had grown to be before the war, and the purchasing power of the franc had always equalled that of the shilling. Our visits to France were therefore as satisfactory financially as they were useful and agreeable, and my husband's French studies repaid him in hard cash when he passed

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his interpreter's examination in 1891. On our return to England he decided to go through a half-pay course at Greenwich, so we took rooms in London for some months, and found ourselves neither happy nor comfortable under the lynx eye of a landlady ever on the alert for damages. Poor little Roger asked me one day if we should never have a house of our very own where he could do what he liked and have no "landlady's furniture" to treat with respect. I was feeling depressed at the moment, but never dreamt I should arouse him to a passion of tears by saying I didn't suppose we should ever have a house of our own. "Other mummies have houses," he sobbed. I knew it, but said *his* mummie must "scrub along somehow" without one. "You *shan't* scrub, Mummie ; I won't let you scrub," he cried, and it was hard to comfort him and remove the sense of injury that was hurting him so sorely. But on looking back over the lean years and the years of carefulness I can remember very few occasions on which the shoe of poverty actually pinched. One incident of that summer in London in 1891 has, however, remained as fresh in my memory as though it had happened only yesterday. It illustrates the vicissitudes of the earthen pot when invited to swim with its copper brethren.

A pretty cousin of mine and her husband asked us to join a Sunday river-party. We were to meet them at Paddington in time for the Henley train, but they never appeared. We had taken first-class return tickets and got into the train at the last possible moment, hoping faintly that we should yet find them

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on the platform at our journey's end. This hope was soon extinguished, and we wandered about forlorn and disappointed in the brilliant sunshine, the only unattached people in a crowd of gay folk. The next train failed to bring our hosts, so we took a little skiff by the hour and set forth upon the river. We lunched frugally on bacon and eggs and tea at a lock-keeper's house, returned to Henley, where we had a horrible tea at fivepence a head at a temperance restaurant, and set off for town by the next train. Our day had cost us twenty-nine shillings and fourpence, and all the pretty cousin said by way of apology was, "Oh, I sent Major —— to Paddington to tell you we weren't going, but he couldn't find you." We had actually seen Major ——, but as we did not know he was to have been of the party and could not guess he was my cousin's emissary we did not speak to him as he passed us in the crowd. We often used to wonder how it was that people no better off than ourselves appeared to have so much fun and gaiety, such smart frocks, and apparently unlimited "petty cash." Whether they omitted to pay their tradesmen's bills or whether they were subsidised by generous relations we could not decide, but they had a good time while we walked to save 'bus fares. I now think it needs both training and native ingenuity to become "Little Sisters and Brothers of the Rich," as I heard social parasites called in America.

Presently we had to consider our next step, for my husband's course at Greenwich was over, and captains' appointments in those days were slow to follow pro-

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motion unless an officer was chosen as flag-captain. So when July came and the gaieties and fine clothes of a London season had thoroughly and painfully emphasised our own shabbiness and limitations we took wing for Switzerland.

CHAPTER XXXVI

HALF-PAY AT SPEZIA

IN Switzerland we shook off our cares and fared sumptuously for six francs a day at Thun, Beatenberg, and Oberhofen. My husband made long walking tours, a source of special delight to one who loved, as he has always done, fine scenery, exercise and solitude, and the mountain air at Beatenberg put new life into Roger and myself. It was there that the small boy had his first fight. There was in our hôtel a much-spoilt Italian princeling who took peculiar delight in teasing and mishandling Roger on every possible occasion. He was a wicked little boy, and just missed braining my sister-in-law by hurling a large tin toy-stable from the top of the stairs as she was descending them. Now Roger's nurse had told him it was wrong to fight, and as Leone was much taller and stronger than he, though no older, her prohibition seemed based on expediency. But there was also staying in the hôtel

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a small English schoolboy, named Guy Smith, who considered it Roger's duty to fight—and beat—his Italian tormentor. On his own responsibility Guy arranged the preliminaries, brought the two little boys together without the cognisance of their nurses, and saw fair play. Roger was victorious ; Guy came to tell the tale of his prowess and my husband rewarded his son with fifty centimes. But his nurse wept, and he was himself sorely puzzled by the situation. That Daddy should give him half a franc for punching Leone's head while Louisa cried because he had been so naughty as to fight constituted an ethical problem which defeated him. One solid advantage was gained ; Leone troubled him no longer.

When the weather turned cooler we descended to Oberhofen, a charming village on the shore of Lake Thun, where our chief pleasure was due to the temporary possession of a light double-scutt English-built skiff. In this we passed long and delightful hours, for September held fine almost to its close. Then the snow came down low on the mountains, stoves overheated the small rooms of the pension, and we gladly packed up and moved southwards.

We reached Spezia on a still and gloriously sunlit evening of early October and took up our quarters on the top floor of the Hôtel Croce di Malta, whence we could see both sea and mountains. It was not only because Spezia was beautifully situated that we had chosen it for our winter home. My husband, bent on learning another foreign language, would there enjoy an opportunity of meeting Italian naval people

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among whom he hoped to acquire a seafaring vocabulary. It had never occurred to us that it would be difficult to obtain an official introduction to the naval authorities at Spezia. But so it proved. Our Admiralty, on being applied to for the needful credentials, referred my husband to the British Embassy at Rome, but Rome, as represented by our Military Attaché (in the absence of his naval *confrère*), refused curtly to have anything to do with "naval officers on half-pay!" This was, indeed, a slap in the face, but long before a personal recommendation obtained through my father as an old friend of the Ambassador (Lord Dufferin) reached my husband he had secured off his own bat the recognition both necessary and desirable.

My neighbour at *table d'hôte* was the Captain of the Torpedo School—Francesco Crespi, kind, witty and somewhat irascible—and he soon satisfied himself that my husband was no spy. But, though his friendly wing was spread over us, Dick would take no risks and got the British Consul to introduce him formally to Admiral Racchia, then Commander-in-Chief at Spezia and later Minister of Marine, a fine old sea-dog, Scotch on his mother's side, who startled my husband by remarking at their first meeting that it was "varra fine weather for the crôps." He and Mme. Racchia were both kind and hospitable to us, and before long we found ourselves not only accepted, but warmly welcomed, by the naval society of the port. Of Anglo-Saxon friends we made but two couples—for few English people live at or near Spezia—Mr. and Mrs. George Henfrey and Mr. and Mrs. Huntington, both

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of whom lived at Lerici. Mr. Henfrey, who died in 1916 at a very advanced age, had been the head of the great iron foundry near Lerici established soon after that long-headed statesman Cavour had discovered the possibilities of Spezia, and Mr. Huntington, an American full of life and intelligence with a charming English wife, was his successor in office. The Henfreys had much to tell us of the old days long before Italy was the Italia Unita of 1870, longer still before that titular unity developed into the proven solidarity of to-day. When the Henfreys, as young people, first arrived at Spezia and took up their quarters at the little hôtel looking out upon a stretch of grass that lay between it and the sea, they saw from their windows at sunset a lady and a gentleman dancing the "heel and toe" polka on the greensward! On inquiry these audacious mortals proved to be Charles Lever and his wife, who for several years made their home at Spezia, where Lever was British Consul. Lovers of Lever and lovers of Italy will find in "Cornelius O'Dowd" a great many interesting things about those times, both before Cavour had discovered the value of Spezia and after he had exploited its lovely shores for the benefit of the country he served so well. Mr. Henfrey told us that one of the Lever girls challenged an Italian officer who prided himself on his powers as a long-distance swimmer to race her across the harbour's mouth from Porto Venere to Lerici—about two and a half miles of open sea, as there was then no breakwater. When Miss Lever had gone three-quarters of the way, she looked back to find her rival had given up and was

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clambering into an attendant boat ; so she said to herself, " I may as well go back to Porto Venere as my clothes are there," and back she went, to arrive as fresh as though she had merely walked a couple of miles on the flat.

Even as late as 1891 there was constant " tribal warfare " between San Terenzo and Lerici, small places on the eastern shore of the harbour, and Mr. Henfrey told us that on Sundays the young men of the district would meet at a certain spot midway between the villages and stone one another ! Despite the terrible inroads on its beauty made by the hand of man, Spezia was still in 1891 set amidst lovely surroundings, wild and varied and rich in flowers, of which the tall white Mediterranean heath was my favourite. An Italian girl very anxious to learn English sometimes walked with us on spring afternoons when flower-gathering was my object. Of her more remarkable efforts to speak our language I have preserved two. She assured us of her enjoyment of country rambles in these words : " I do not love to go ' toof, toof ' like an ass. I love to stop and catch the savage flower " ; and when describing the evening gown of a friend she observed " The corpse was dead white and carried." (The *corsage* was of lustreless white and cut square (*carré*).) We could only surmise that our own mistakes were quite as comic as these, and sometimes even unintelligible to our kind and courteous Italian friends, for they never by the twinkle of an eye betrayed their amusement or amazement.

From our windows at the Croce di Malta we could

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see the snowy peaks of the Apennines as well as the fine curves and promontories of the eastern side of the harbour. Our rooms were at the top of the house, and were reached by a double flight of shallow white marble steps which led in undiminished beauty right up to our rooms. Several naval officers and their wives stayed in the hôtel, and bachelors like Captain Crespi made it their home. Thus we found ourselves from the first in a comfortably Italian atmosphere, and, but for a couple of untravelled Britons contemptuous of all that was un-British, we were surrounded by people so friendly and genial that the learning of Italian was made as pleasant as possible to my husband, while I soon recaptured all I had lost in the previous sixteen years and added a great deal to my store. Captain Crespi was rather contemptuous with respect to the poverty of the everyday vocabulary of an English man or woman. He spoke no English and understood the spoken language with difficulty, but read English books with ease. One of his complaints, well justified, I think, was that we worked an innocent word to death. "Sorry" was one such word. "If I die," he said, "you are *veyrie sawrie* ; if it is a wet day you are *veyrie sawrie* ; if Vesuvius is in eruption and overwhelms a village you are *veyrie sawrie*. And *nice* ! Am I, perhaps, nice ? " (I said "Heaven forbid that I should call you so ! "). "I am glad I am not nice ; but English people say Rome is nice, and *bombe glacée* is nice, and the sunset on the mountains, and the music of Scarlatti or Verdi or Mascagni ! To me they are *énervants*, this *nice* and this *sawrie*." If I

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made a very bad error in speaking Italian he would draw in his breath with a sharp hiss and say "Oh, my neuralgia!" as if I had caused him a twinge of actual pain. Perhaps I did. Of course this treatment was "permitted" and it was very wholesome, since I should otherwise have grown vain. I used to write letters or themes for Captain Mirabello and Lieutenant Capomazza (A.D.C. to Prince Luigi, Duke of the Abruzzi, now famous as an explorer and an admiral), and the other day I came across one of these, preserved by some chance for twenty-five years, bearing the pleasing word "*Benissimo*" in Captain Mirabello's handwriting.

Prince Luigi, son of the Duke of Aosta (brother of King Humbert of Italy, and once King of Spain), was a boy of twenty in 1891 and still under the guardianship of Conte Falicon, who lived near the Croce di Malta with his delicate and very interesting wife. The Prince and Lieutenant Capomazza had rooms in the hôtel, and the Prince's valet was a friend of Roger's. This important functionary contributed not a little to spoil the small boy who was then five years old and every evening attended Lieutenant Capomazza by special request when he was dressing for dinner. One day he ran to tell me that he had been talking to Prince Luigi, who had come into his room to find Roger "helping" Michele to put his things out. "What did you do?" I asked. "Oh, I just standed up on the floor and saluted," answered Roger. "Did the Prince say anything to you?" "He asked what was the matter with my eye, so I said 'sty, sapete?'"

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I cannot suppose *sty* was a word known to the Prince, who then spoke little English, but the shocking familiarity of *sapete** must have distressed Michele.

We had a great deal of dancing that winter, and I introduced the barn-dance, which I had learnt from an American girl in Switzerland, to my Italian friends. It was not then a romp, and we performed it for the first time with great propriety, not to say solemnity, at a ball given by Contessa Falicon. I had previously instructed the dozen couples who danced it, and led the procession with Prince Luigi, and we all wore white carnations as a special distinction! As for the music, I had written down from memory the tune my American friend had played, and this was easily set by the bandmaster for his orchestra.

There was lawn-tennis, too, and visits to various ships in harbour, and every fine day Roger went out on the water with a handsome old boatman attached to the hôtel. What those two talked about in the lingo peculiar to each of them I cannot now say, but the small boy loved Manuele and had a great deal to tell me of their doings together.

Among our new friends the chief were Captain Mirabello of the *Maria Adelaïde* (Gunnery School ship), who became Minister of Marine in about 1904; Captain Crespi, in charge of the Torpedo School; Captain Faravelli (later Admiral and Commander-in-Chief) and pretty Madame Faravelli; Captain Agnelli and his kind English wife; and Captain and Mme.

* The second person, plural, is not used in speaking to strangers or superiors.

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Grenet. Then there were Lieutenants Corsi, Merlo, Bruno, Orsini, Leoncavallo, and a tribe of others, besides a bunch of midshipmen, dear to me (as is all the species of whatever nationality), but far more advanced in the ways of the world and the path of serious flirtation than are ours. Captain Grenet spoke English admirably, as did many of his brother officers. He had been Italian Naval Attaché in London, and his technical vocabulary was perhaps more complete than that of any other English-speaking officer, and there were many, at Spezia. But in a letter I received from him some time after we had left Italy he used a phrase less correct than was his habit. Speaking of his command, the *Lepanto*, he said: "There are many harbours which unluckily I cannot visit on account of the *cursed bigness* of this ship."

Italian naval people are, like our own, rarely rich, but they were, in those days at any rate, almost invariably of good social standing. We knew them for what they were—gentlefolks; but the entire lack of snobbishness so delightful and so noticeable among Italians kept us in ignorance of the greatness of their families until some accident revealed the fact. The absolute simplicity combined with distinction which characterised their manners made them peculiarly attractive, and our intercourse with them never suffered from the banality or formality which, to my mind, so often spoils the earlier stages of acquaintance-ship with persons of races more conventional and punctilious than our own.

VIAREGGIO AND BAGNI DI LUCCA

CHAPTER XXXVII

VIAREGGIO AND BAGNI DI LUCCA

AFTER five months at Spezia my husband decided to leave a place where a stay further protracted might encourage the suspicions of people whose duty it was to be on the look out for spies, but it was with great regret that we said good-bye to our friends of the Italian Navy, whose hospitality had given to us, poor wanderers on half-pay, so delightful a winter. I had but two evening gowns, and only once did we *drive* to and from a ball, but what the ladies of *Cranford* would have called an elegant economy was the rule in the circle we had been permitted to join—a circle whose notable simplicity never degenerated into ugliness, though I often regretted the want of comfort afforded by good fires on the hearth, for which we considered *scaldini* and the wearing of fur coats indoors but a poor substitute.

It was to Viareggio that we went on leaving Spezia. There we took a furnished house at an absurdly low rent, and as it became bitterly cold in mid-March we were at first undeniably unhappy. Besides being half-frozen in rooms with *sciagliola* floors (so cool and pleasant in hot weather) we were lonely, for until the bathing season begins there is no society at Viareggio. Roger, too, missed his many friends, and when the white-bearded English chaplain from Pisa called as

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our first visitor we had reached the lowest depths of social isolation. No sooner had the front door closed behind Mr. Honiss than an indignant little boy descended from the nursery to say "You had a visitor, Mummie, and you never called *me!*" and a burst of tears followed this pathetic admission of a passionate desire for the society of even white-haired old gentlemen. As the spring advanced matters rapidly improved and we found many charms in our surroundings. The vines burst into leaf, the Carrara Mountains were bathed in warm sunshine, the great *pineta*, a pinewood extending for miles along the shore, was delicious to walk in, and the narrow *bocca* (river-mouth), in and out of which fishing-boats dashed precariously, was full of picturesque life. Then the bathing began, and we spent most of our days in amphibious fashion. Never have I bathed more luxuriously. The long wooden piers running out at right angles to the sandy beach had bathers' rooms built upon them, and in the floor of each was a ladder by which one descended unseen to the sea. Hot fresh water in tubs was ready in each room when we returned from our swim, and little booths where biscuits and vermouth and particularly delicious peppermints were sold tempted the sharp-set bather to spend a few centesimi.

My housekeeping was made easy by the priceless possession of an excellent cook, a Lucchese named Caterina, who did all the marketing and was as honest and economical as she was obliging. My Italian vocabulary was deficient in every-day words necessary to a housekeeper, but as the language of the Lucchesi

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is particularly pure I learnt, and learnt correctly, from Caterina a vast number of domestic terms relating to meat, fruit and vegetables, groceries, and weights and measures. She was very dramatic when discussing the butcher's orders and would place her hand on that part of her own person corresponding to the joint she proposed to buy so that I might understand her wishes, and the neck or cutlets of mutton, the ribs or shin of beef, the shoulder of lamb, the back or side of bacon, and even the less elegant portions of veal were thus made the subject of an Italian lesson—with illustrations—by the good woman.

Roger presently found friends among the children who frequented the beach, and would entertain them there in our own *capanna* (a thatched hut), or be received in theirs along with his nurse. The Duke of Parma had a villa near Viareggio, and Roger's dearest friends were the children of a gentleman of his suite. One day the little Parmas came to spend the afternoon in the *capanna* where Roger and his nurse were honorary members, and the latter was really hurt by being told that during the visit of the "Principi" (of whom the unhappy Princess Ferdinand of Bulgaria was one) she and her charge must not intrude.

With June came my husband's appointment to the command of the cruiser *Apollo*, then brand-new, for the manœuvres, so he was unable to accompany us to the baths of Lucca, where we had taken a house for the hot months of July, August, and September. Though this was, of course, a great disappointment to me, we were both glad that he should have even

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temporary employment after more than two years of inaction.

At Bagni di Lucca we lived in a comfortable old house, Casa del Chiappa, where Caterina cooked for us and her daughter Linda acted as house-parlourmaid. The nightingales singing in a garden lit by fireflies kept me awake on the hottest nights, and a narrow river rushed foaming past the foot of the garden. The tonic effect of my morning swim was welcome enough, but the fact that no mosquitoes haunted a spot where such swift water raced was of even greater moment. Early every morning I used to fling myself into the icy current to be carried like a leaf to a point where our territory ended, run back along the wide stone-capped embankment and repeat the process, for to swim against such a stream was out of the question. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. one stayed indoors with every window and shutter closed; but when the sun declined behind the mountains one could walk among the hills or play lawn-tennis with other summer visitors. The lovely steep and grassy glades of Bagni were clothed in Spanish chestnut, and as the bread of the peasants was made of chestnut flour the chestnut crop was of great importance. It was said that if a Lucchese should go to Viareggio he would die of dyspepsia brought on by eating bread made of *gran' turco* (maize meal), whereas a Viareggino at Lucca would succumb to a diet of chestnut bread! However the Lucchesi looked far better nourished than their brethren on the coast, who, except in the bathing season, which brought money-spenders, were as poor

VIAREGGIO AND BAGNI DI LUCCA

as poor could be and were kept poor by the exactions of the octroi, which levied a tax on every little handful of *nichi* (a small watery shellfish) that passed the town gate. Even the collecting of salt by evaporation was prohibited because salt was a Government monopoly. But the poverty of the Viareggini showed no rags. The women washed and patched their gowns until they were faded or particoloured beyond recognition, and every woman knitted her own stockings. I never saw one that was down at heel or darned, but the wooden *zoccoli* in which they clattered about had no golosh at the back of the heel, so there was no friction between shoe and stocking. Many visitors to Italy judge rashly of the characteristics of the lower classes after a few days at Naples and fill their minds with such tales of brigands and the *Maffia* as appeal to their love of sensation. These good tourists never dream of drawing any distinction between the inhabitants of a spot like Naples (where their own presence encourages the rapacious longshore harpy, the teasing guide, and the unscrupulous vendor of rubbishy mementoes) and the self-respecting, hard-working *contadino* of Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Veneto. The Neapolitan is as far removed in character and customs from the Torinese as is a Kerryman from a Yorkshireman, and would be confronted with linguistic difficulties even greater on finding himself in Piemonte than Paddy Sullivan would encounter when struggling to converse with a denizen of the West Riding of Yorkshire. And the points of view are as utterly dissimilar as the lingo. Picturesque rags are neither paying

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nor proper in North Italy ; brigandage stops short at a certain latitude, and dirt and lies are but little esteemed above that parallel. I shall never forget hearing the wife of a Church of England chaplain in our hôtel at Spezia descant upon the failings of Italians generally. She was a Dublin woman and was specially shocked by *the absence of backyards* in Spezia ! “ How can the poor creatures be clean,” she asked, “ when they have to put their refuse in tins in the street outside their houses ? ”—as though the possession of a fly-haunted refuse-heap behind one’s house were a thing to boast of. One day she found some wild sage when walking on the hills near the harbour. She had nothing to say of the beauty of the early spring flowers, but the wild sage appealed to her. “ I’d have picked a bunch,” she said, regretfully, “ but I felt sure the cook here, poor creature, *wouldn’t know so much as how to stuff a duck.*”

Richard Bagot’s books show anyone desirous of being well informed how the Italian *contadino* actually lives and thinks. Upon Mr. Bagot has fallen the mantle of Marion Crawford. These two novelists obtained the right to act as exponents of the national character in all classes and many provinces by long residence in Italy and by true, and therefore discriminating, affection for her people.

H.M.S. *APOLLO*

CHAPTER XXXVIII

H.M.S. *APOLLO*

A GREAT catastrophe befel us in August, 1892, and we were deprived of the comfort of bearing it together. My husband in the *Apollo* was, with the *Naiad*, following the *Forth* (senior officer) round the Skelligs in a dense fog during manœuvres. The *Forth*, leading, was in a position to avoid the rocks upon which the *Naiad*, like No. 2 in a game of "follow my leader," inevitably struck, and to the *Apollo*'s captain was left the choice, to be made instantaneously, between jumping on the *Naiad*'s back or picking out a rock for himself. He chose the latter. He had been writing to me in his cabin before the fog closed down, and his last words were: "It's coming on thick and I must be off on deck again. I don't at all like our keeping up this speed—thirteen knots—in such weather on a particularly nasty coast." But his was not the responsibility. The senior officer, who had already gained notoriety by losing two ships, set the pace and the course with consequences disastrous to his own career, but cruel enough to the two junior captains under his orders. The *Apollo* struggled off her rock and got round under her own steam to Queenstown, where presently a Court of Inquiry was held, but owing to some irregularity in the proceedings this was not considered adequate by their Lordships and a Court-martial was ordered. A whole month elapsed between the disaster

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and the holding of the Court-martial at Portsmouth, whither the poor crippled *Apollo* had to make her way as best she might in a much damaged condition, since Haulbowline Dockyard, for reasons local or political, proved unaccommodating. At the Court-martial, which lasted an entire week, my husband made no defence worth the name, for he held that every captain is responsible for the safety of the ship he commands, whatever the circumstances other than those produced by the "act of God." I, less high-principled and bitterly resenting the sacrifice of the two junior captains to the proved ineptitude of their leader, have never concurred in the sentence of the Court that they should be "admonished." How would it have appeared if the junior officers had warned their senior of the risk he was running? Such things are not done. If a leader misleads those under his orders, discipline ordains that the misled should follow and suffer—the innocent with the guilty. The captain of the *Forth* was never employed again.

For myself those five long weeks passed miserably. I could not afford to give up my house at Bagni and fly to my husband's side, and I was among people wholly ignorant of naval life, its chances and mischances. So I lay awake and cried while the nightingales sang, and slipped away alone to the chestnut woods in the cool of the evening and cried again; but my husband's grief at having hurt his beautiful new ship seemed deeper than any he felt for himself.

Later I heard from Dick's first lieutenant how the *Apollo's* men had at first wanted to send a deputation

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to their captain to thank him for having pulled them through so tight a place, but this, being contrary to regulations, could, of course, not be permitted. Then they decided to send a long and costly telegram to the two naval papers most read in the Service—the *Western Morning News* and the *Hampshire Telegraph*—and a copy of the former containing this “testimonial” reached me from our old landlady of No 11, Southsea Terrace, soon enough to help me through the worst :—

“ The crew of the *Apollo* wish us to insert the following :—

“ ‘ BEREHAVEN, *Friday, August 12th, 1892.*

“ ‘ We wish to convey our gratitude to the captain of said ship through the channels of your paper for the prompt action taken by him at the time of the ship striking the rocks off the Great Skelligs. This occurred on Thursday in a dense fog when keeping station in line ahead in the rear of two other cruisers, and it is firmly believed that the timely action taken and the promptness shown by him averted a serious collision with the *Naiad* and also prevented us from finding ourselves hard and fast on the rocks, in which case both ships must have become a total wreck, and no doubt a very great loss of life would have resulted. There would have been very small chances of escape, and the coolness displayed by Captain Poore has won the hearts of all on board.’ ”

The *Western Morning News* Naval Editor prefaces this communication with the words :—

“ It is pleasing to note the commendations of the ship’s company of the *Apollo* in regard to the coolness and good judgment displayed by Captain Poore. It is, perhaps, unusual for a ship’s company to telegraph such comments to a newspaper, but this course has probably been taken

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in order to prevent hasty criticisms being made in other quarters."

It was on Saturday, September 15th, 1892, that Dick was tried for "hazarding and stranding" his ship. That morning, as soon as the telegraph office at Bagni was open, I crept down the quiet shady street and sent off a telegram to Portsmouth directed, for want of a more correct address, to "Court-martial Ship," Portsmouth. I could not trust the postmistress to transmit an English message, and the three words "Coraggio, caro mio" conveyed all I wanted so much to say. It was just when my husband, deprived of his sword, was awaiting the decision of the Court that my message was handed to him. He said it was precisely what he most needed at that moment, and the flimsy paper, discoloured by long exposure, hangs framed to this day beside his writing-table. A splinter (extracted from the ship's bottom) of the rock on which the *Apollo* ran also survives, mounted as a letter-weight, and these mementoes keep alive the recollection of almost the hardest trial of our joint existence; but there has always been comfort and pride mingled with the trouble they recall, for the confidence and appreciation of his men, though dearly bought, was very precious to us both.

Meanwhile my time at Bagni was drawing to a close, and Viareggio was the first stage on the homeward way. There we stopped, and thence, greatly invigorated by a week of sea bathing, betook ourselves *viâ* Spezia and Dijon to London.

H.M.S. *TOURMALINE*

CHAPTER XXXIX

H.M.S. *TOURMALINE*

AGAIN we settled down in London, and were very fortunate in our new quarters on Campden Hill, where we found a landlady so kind and comfort so genuine that we should have been loath to exchange with a millionaire in Park Lane. Roger went to a kindergarten close at hand where he learnt very little of anything, but he was kept occupied for a couple of hours every morning and was, at any rate, taught the first rudiments of school discipline.

We had scarcely been a month in Kensington when my husband was offered the command of a corvette on the North American Station, and this he accepted with alacrity. The communication from the Admiralty was confidential, and he was therefore amazed to receive a letter two days later from their Lordships to say that as he had chosen to disregard their wishes by publishing his appointment in an evening paper their offer was withdrawn. To no one had my husband breathed a word of the offer, and when a friend of ours taxed the editor of the paper with having done an unpardonable thing he was told that Captain Poore had himself volunteered the information to the editor in the train by which they were fellow-travellers from Portsmouth to London! This was a double- or treble-barrelled falsehood. My husband had neither made the journey in question nor met the editor, nor

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ing her, snatched the "hoops" from the ground, hid them under her long cloak and stepped swiftly into the carriage. "Thank you, my dear; that was nobly done," said her chaperon.

The last time I saw Sir Algernon Heneage he was sadly changed. It was at a State Ball in 1912, and he was then so feeble that he was unable to rise to his feet when the Royal Procession passed by on their way to supper. But he was as smartly turned out as of yore, and, though it was nearly twenty years since we had last met, I found he had not forgotten me when I sat down beside him to have a yarn.

It was very interesting to me to make the acquaintance of the *Tourmaline's* gunroom officers, but I must admit that when my husband and I met two of them (naval cadets just hatched out) on the seawall at Sheerness they looked as though they would sooner cast themselves into the sea than encounter their captain and his wife. Some of them had relations who came down to Sheerness to see them, and I was the object of much flattering attention on the part of more than one anxious parent. Indeed, the grandfather of one midshipman staying at the "Fountain" plied us with champagne at dinner, while a fond mother presented my husband with a box of plover's eggs and myself with a bunch of Maréchal Niel roses. The eggs were sent on board just before the ship sailed, and, sad to relate, they were put on one side by the captain's steward to be discovered only through a powerful appeal to his nose when the ship was half way to Bermuda. But neither champagne, roses, nor

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plover's eggs were needed to enlist my affections. Even before they can themselves have been aware of it I had become the friend of the *Tourmaline's* gunroom officers, and much of my enjoyment during the three years that followed was due to as nice a set of boys as one would wish to meet.

Our good-byes were said on April 22nd, and soon afterwards Roger and I went over to stay with my father at Limerick. While I was at the Palace an alarming incident occurred. This was the failure of Messrs. Hallett, bankers and naval agents. With a very serious face my father showed me the paragraph in the morning paper announcing the news. Finance was never my strong point, and visions of actual ruin assailed me as I put on my things and flew to the house of one of the kindest of friends—one to whom I never appealed in vain for help or advice—the late Mr. James Fitzgerald Bannatyne. In a few hours he had not only discovered the precise condition of affairs, but had himself volunteered to be my banker until matters could be arranged. This failure of Messrs. Hallett was entirely due to their own over-generous leniency to clients. No securities were affected by it, and I fancy that a great proportion of those naval officers who banked with Halletts had no balances worth mentioning to lose. The next thing I did was to consult my *Unicode* and concoct a cable which my husband should receive on his arrival at Bermuda. The cable rate was then, I think, 10/6 a word, and I most unwisely confined my message to two of these expensive units. Search as I would, I could

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find nothing more appropriate and reassuring than "There is no cause for apprehension" (Aggravo), and to this I added "Halletts." When my husband received the message he had heard nothing of the bank failure and jumped to the conclusion that I was seriously but not mortally ill! *Halletts* he regarded as his agent's signature. This little story points a moral. There is no economy in sending a short cable if it leaves the recipient in any doubt as to its meaning.

The *Tourmaline* had a long and weary voyage to Bermuda and arrived to find the Squadron departed for Halifax. The chrysanthemums her Captain was charged to deliver to Lady Hopkins, wife of his Commander-in-Chief, had been eaten "to the bone" by the sheep on board during the voyage, so they had time to sprout under the benign influence of the rain-water obtained at Bermuda before they were handed over to their owner at Halifax, but General Lyons, Governor of Bermuda, was not pleased to find that the full-sized billiard table he had been expecting *per Tourmaline* had not arrived! Shore-going people do not always remember that the cargo capacity of a small man-o'-war (the *Tourmaline's* tonnage was only 2,120) is far inferior to that of the ocean tramp.

The question which agitated our minds for several months after my husband's appointment to the *Tourmaline* was this:—Could he find a suitable cottage in Bermuda so that he might, with the consent of his Commander-in-Chief, invite me to join him there in the autumn when the Squadron would be coming south again? Only at the end of August did I hear that

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what I so ardently wished was to come about, and then the inevitable and unhappy task of finding a home in England for Roger, now seven years old, faced me. For long I had debated in my mind whether husband or son had the stronger claim upon me. I was keenly anxious to join my husband at Bermuda, but I could not be sure that I was right in leaving the small boy for two years and a half. Two friends of mine helped me to decide, but the fact that the decision I arrived at was the one to which my strongest inclinations pointed has always prevented my feeling that I was right to do as I did. One of these friends was an old Scottish lady, who insisted that my husband needed me most, solemnly assuring me that children of Roger's age did not forget their mothers during their absence. The other, whose position as the wife of an officer in India gave her a right to speak, said: "Other women may take as good care as, sometimes even better care than, one can oneself of one's children; *but no woman wants another to take care of her husband for her*, and that is what sometimes happens when a man is long separated from his wife." I cannot say I had any genuine misgivings on this head, but I could see the wisdom of my friend's reasoning. There is no doubt that the captain of a ship is generally a very lonely man. He leads a life so entirely apart from his ship-mates for reasons of discipline that, without some sort of shore-home to go to, a married captain on a distant station is only too likely to become an object of compassion in the eyes of kind-hearted women, some of whom are wise and some foolish. If he is a gregarious

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person he may find himself quite at home upon the adopted hearth. He will only see his charitable hostess at her best and may conclude that she is always sweet-tempered and has naturally curly hair. In these beliefs he may be utterly mistaken, but he *knows* his wife is sometimes irritable, and he has seen her hair waved with tongs or, worse still, twisted up in "curlers" which mar the appearance of the very loveliest woman.

I was fortunate indeed in finding the ideal deputy-mother for Roger in the person of my friend Mrs. Stanford, at Winchester, where I was confident he would be both loved and cared for during my absence. I cannot say whether the parting from his nurse, the faithful and beloved Louisa who had been with us through thick and thin for six years, was a greater or less sorrow to him than that of bidding me good-bye. I was never jealous of the affection he had for her, and I know the separation gave her the keenest pain. But he had outgrown the nursery, and a governess both wise and kind was to take charge of his education, while he would receive from Mr. and Mrs. Stanford affection and understanding.*

* When Roger was nine years old Mr. Stanford moved from Winchester to Rottingdean, where he established his famous preparatory school, "St. Aubyn's," and there Roger was one of his first pupils.

WESTWARD HO!

CHAPTER XL

WESTWARD HO!

IT was on September 15th, 1893, that I took my small boy down to Winchester, and two days later I passed the back of Mr. Stanford's house in the boat-train on my way to Southampton, where I embarked for New York. The nursery window was wide open, but no little face looked out, and I carried the memory of that empty frame in my heart for many a long day.

My voyage procured me one pleasure—the acquaintance of a very charming American girl, Miss Gilfillan, from St. Paul. The stewardess was gentle, but the sea was rough, and I landed limp, aching, and thankful at Hoboken. In the first five minutes I wished that America had a language as exclusively her own as has France or Italy, for of course I said “luggage” and “boxes” instead of “baggage” and “trunks”; I called a “hack” a “cab,” and I offered the Hoboken ferry clerk three pennies (thirty centimes) instead of the thirty *cents*. he demanded! I also deeply resented having to burden myself with many pounds weight of brass baggage checks which stood for the safety of the heavy items to be put on board the Bermuda steamer *Orinoco* by which I was to sail in forty-eight hours. When I had paid 12/6 to the hackman who half an hour later deposited me and my light luggage at the Brevoort House I felt America was no place

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for me, and even a marvellous breakfast consisting of about fifteen dishes all equally unsuited to a digestion shattered by many days of sea-sickness did nothing to mitigate my pessimism. And I had so looked forward to meeting waffles and maple syrup and corn bread in their native land! However, a couple of hours' rest on a delicious big bed, and oceans of the hottest bath water to follow, helped to restore my serenity, and when Miss Susan Ross Dodge, the clever and kind American girl who had taught us to dance the barn-dance in Switzerland in 1891, arrived to bid me welcome I was dressed in garments untainted by cabin use and no longer to be identified with the misanthropic British Bear who had passed that morning through the odious ordeal of an American Custom-house.

The extraordinary kindness of Americans to newcomers like myself is beyond praise and almost beyond comprehension. It seems to me a survival of the old days when any stranger was welcome to the lonely and often struggling colonists of the eighteenth century. There is certainly nothing to equal it in England.

Next day it was Miss Gilfillan who became my personal conductor, and, though not only the Four Hundred but about Forty Thousand of New York's choicest and best inhabitants were out of town at that season, I learnt something of how life was lived in that vast city. At the steamer office whither I went to make inquiries respecting my voyage to Bermuda I found a pleasant and sympathetic chief, and, just as I was leaving, a fine-looking man came in whom Mr. Outerbridge introduced to me as Mr. James

WESTWARD HO!

Trimmingham, of Bermuda, my fellow-passenger on the morrow.

I cannot pretend that I had an ounce of courage left with which to face the cross-grained seas between New York and Bermuda, but the knowledge that I should soon reach my journey's end and meet my husband supported me through thirty-six hours of unmitigated misery. As the ship was picking her way out of New York Harbour I stood on deck with Mr. Trimmingham and asked a few of the many questions I wanted answered about the beautiful islands he called Home; but my catechism had not proceeded far before he remarked, "I think I ought to tell you that I am what we in Bermuda call a storekeeper and English people call a shopkeeper." I am sure I neither fainted nor screamed, and I hope I said, "It doesn't matter a bit what your occupation is so long as you are, as is most obvious, a gentleman," for that is what I felt and desired to express.

People well acquainted with Bermuda and the West Indies (Bermuda, once and for all, is *not* in the West Indies) know that business-folk there are actually obliged to run their own shops or stores, for the high pay expected by white *employés* would swallow up half the receipts of their principals; but I have seen officers born far out of the purple (and wives of officers also) actually turn their backs upon Bermudian gentlemen at a dance because, forsooth, they were "shopkeepers." If English visitors to Bermuda would but take the trouble to learn something of the island's history they would discover that the oldest of its

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families can trace their descent to scions of the best English stock who were wrecked on its coast on their way to Virginia at a period when the ancestor of Captain X—— of the Blankshire Fusiliers had not a decent coat to his back, much less a coat-of-arms on his carriage panel.

I must confess I felt embarrassed when I first entered the big store of the Trimmingham brothers in Front Street, Hamilton, but my late shipmate put me so completely at my ease by his pleasant and dignified acceptance of the situation that I rallied quickly and found myself asking his advice as to what kind of puggaree would be the best to get. And over and over again during my time at Bermuda he would suggest my buying that which was less expensive than what I had in mind.

CHAPTER XLI

“ BEAUTIFUL ISLE OF THE SEA ”

WHEN I saw my husband come alongside the *Orinoco* in his galley in Grassy Bay I felt as a trapeze lady must feel when she has made a long and perilous flight through the air and grasps the swinging bar which stands for safety. Even sitting on the trim lawn of the Cottage at Ireland Island, where the Captain in Charge, my host for the first few days, lived, I was only half-thankful for my deliverance from the perils of the deep, for it seemed then as though the island was only

“BEAUTIFUL ISLE OF THE SEA”

a little more secure, a little wider, than a ship's deck, and until I had passed a whole week ashore I could not fully appreciate my delightful surroundings as they deserved.

Bermuda in October comes, to my mind, as near perfection in climate as any place I have seen. The intense deep blue of the sea, upon the surface of which rocks submerged paint patches of amaranth, the rich greens of lawns and cedar trees, the hedges of rosy oleanders twenty or thirty feet high, all had a robust and vivid beauty; the coral rocks and coral strands a stainless purity; while the boundless horizon, the generous sun, the salt-spiced air mitigated rather than accentuated the isolation. A valley surrounded by high mountains will imprison body and spirit as a handful of coral islands rising from a great and passionate ocean never may. And then the exquisite sense of cleanliness imparted by an air ever swept and washed which no taint other than that of a passing ship's smoke pollutes! There are sunsets more wonderful than Alpine regions can show, since the whole firmament is spread before the entranced beholder, himself the tiny centre of the world's floor. The deep-blue dome is plumed and fretted with clouds of crimson and amber, purple and burnished gold; the sea gives back the colours from its shimmering breast; the islands swim in the reflected light. The splendour gathers, deepens, disperses and fades till only a band of faintest primrose remains between a sea grown dark and a heaven of clear lavender patterned with the silvery lacework of ten thousand stars.

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Bermuda is a Crown Colony with a Governor who is also Military Commander-in-Chief. In 1893—96 the garrison consisted of a battalion of the Berkshire regiment, some Garrison Artillery, and a handful of Royal Engineers and Army Service Corps. It is generally believed that three hundred and sixty-five islands go to make up the colony. I never attempted to count them, but I know there are a great many. On the central island of the group, which forms a rough crescent is Hamilton, the capital. Government House, Parliament House, the Law Courts, Prospect Barracks and several American hotels, both large and small, are also to be found there, while Admiralty House is delightfully placed at Clarence Cove on its northern shore. Hundreds of veranda'd bungalows, gabled and white-washed, are dotted about the length and breadth of the group of islands. Pleasant gardens in which standard magnolias and spreading poincianas flourish, surround the bungalows, whose flower-beds flame with canna and gladiolus. Oleanders—white, pink, and rose-coloured—are everywhere, and hibiscus and althea, bignonia and buddleia take the place of the laurustinus, privet and berberis that compose an ordinary English shrubbery. The natural wood of Bermuda presents but little variety, consisting as it does almost entirely of the common cedar—a very poor relation of that of Lebanon, giving but little shade, as it carries its branches not horizontally but vertically—and the undergrowth is chiefly composed of the strong-smelling sage-brush and the broad-leaved life-plant, an accommodating parasite found anywhere and everywhere. Coarse

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creeping grass, known as crab-grass, covers the ground thickly and makes the islands marvellously green. The sea is as marvellously blue, and the roof of every house is (compulsorily) of a dazzling whiteness, for the heavens alone provide the inhabitants of Bermuda with water for all purposes, and from these white-washed roofs the rain runs into the capacious domestic tank attached to every dwelling. Bermuda is not flat ; its surface is delightfully diversified, although its highest point is scarcely four hundred feet above the sea, and its hills and hollows, glades and nooks have infinite charm and variety. As for its shores, no pen can describe the beauty of their curves and pockets of white sand, sometimes shell-strewn and often backed by hedges of plummy tamarisk. Boating and bathing are to be enjoyed under peculiarly favourable conditions, since there are neither slimy seaweed, green mud, nor dangerous tides and squalls, and we were told that no white person had ever fallen a victim to a shark in Bermudian waters. All the same, I confess that I was never perfectly at ease in the water, for I had watched the sharks gathering round the ships in Grassy Bay after the men's dinner-hour, and there was nothing to prevent their eating me when I bathed less than a mile away. But there are neither snakes nor scorpions in these happy islands, and I do not think the huge mosquitoes are more vicious than the smaller ones to be met with in other places.

By great good luck there was when I arrived a vacant bungalow on the military island of Boaz, next to Ireland Island, upon which the Dockyard

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is situated, and this the Governor kindly allowed us to occupy. The scanty allowance of barrack furniture we found there did not include such necessities as chests of drawers or wardrobes, armchairs, sofas or mosquito-nets, and I do not think there were any window-curtains. But we bought what we could not improvise and improvised what we could not afford to buy. My deck-chair was the only "easy" one in the house, carpets we had none, and yet I cannot remember that we were uncomfortable. Sunshine and sweet air, cleanliness and space, rooms unencumbered with non-essentials, delicately pink-washed walls and well-stained floors are not bad substitutes for luxury when one is young and happy and healthy, and in my husband's coxswain, Reynolds, and Priday, his cook, we had two jewels. If I asked Priday to produce dinner for three hungry midshipmen (belated callers) he would snatch his spotless cap from his head as though to give his brains air and reply, "Very good, ma'am. I have plenty of eggs and Reynolds will pop across to the canteen and see what he can find." My husband's steward and also his valet were coal-black. The latter was an excellent bowler, but I cannot remember that he had any other merit; the former was useless, and one night he polished the wine-glasses before placing them on the table at dessert with his heavily-scented pocket-handkerchief! This loathsome crime, swiftly detected by my nose, led to his summary ejection and dismissal by an indignant Captain, and his place was filled by a young Englishman with a superior standard of propriety.

“BEAUTIFUL ISLE OF THE SEA”

The garden of our bungalow contained a few scarlet geraniums, two sago-palms and a loud-voiced and imperturbable cat, but I was ambitious, though ignorant, and presently Reynolds and I established in its two large round beds seedlings of various kinds disposed with the undeviating symmetry to be observed in coastguard station gardens. In the narrow borders round three sides of the house some of the *Tourmaline's* midshipmen sowed sweet peas and other annuals. We decided unanimously that a stout sago-palm took up too much room in the centre of one of the round beds, and on a hot November afternoon one post-captain, one energetic lieutenant, three large midshipmen, and Reynolds tailed on to a rope fastened round the palm's waist and with a “one, two, three, haul——” violently uprooted it, themselves falling backwards in a perfect Laocoön of arms and legs upon the grass plot. There the captain reposed in the arms of the lieutenant, and Reynolds was flattened beneath the weight of the midshipmen. I lived to regret the expulsion of the scarlet geraniums and even the sago-palm, for they had been better than beds neatly edged with lace-plant but otherwise empty of all but dying seedlings. One improvement in the garden was effected—by the army; a friendly subaltern kindly shot the cat.

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CHAPTER XLII

NEW VISITING-CARDS

THE *Tourmaline* was a happy ship. There were "regrettable incidents" on board no doubt from time to time, as, for instance, when I asked the Chief Engineer, next whom I sat when lunching in the ward-room, why the drinking water on board ship tasted as though ropes had been boiled in it. He blushed so violently that I knew I had said something dreadful, but only learnt later that chief engineers are responsible for the water supply.

Christmas was close at hand, though a long succession of perfect days had made us forget that the season of storms was approaching, when my husband received a cable announcing the death of his father. It was many long years since they had met, for Sir Edward had early adopted a roving life, and for one reason or another not one of my husband's station-mates knew that his father's death would make him a baronet. Our position was a little awkward. It was difficult to advertise the fact that our style and title had changed so my husband wrote to his Commander-in-Chief to explain the situation. Even then Ireland and Somerset Islands remained in ignorance and, until Mrs. Cornish, wife of the first lieutenant, with considerable courage took the bull by the horns and came to ask me if I were not now Lady Poore, we shyly preserved our embarrassing incognito. Then I besought her to

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spread the tidings, and went with a sense of relief to buy some blank cards upon which I wrote in trembling characters "Lady Poore." My husband broke the news to Reynolds and Priday, who acted upon the information each after his kind. Reynolds startled me by inquiring with complete *aplomb* whether My Ladyship would require him to water the garden that evening as rain was threatening, and Priday tore his cap from his head when next I entered the kitchen saying, "You'll excuse me ma'am—My Lady, I mean—if I don't say it right at first. It come rather a surprise, me not knowing there was a title in the family."

The event in no way improved our financial position, and I sometimes felt sorry I could not rise to the occasion by being richly clad and diamond-decked. My dear old Uncle Robert, my father's elder brother, and Sub-Dean of the Chapel Royal, Dublin, had died recently and left each of his nephews and nieces a legacy of a few hundred pounds, and out of this I bought myself some things for my toilet-table which I had long desired. They of course impressed no one but myself, but I must say I enjoyed having a pair of pretty brushes, a looking-glass, and some silver-topped pots and boxes beyond those provided by my useful travelling-bag, and I certainly experienced a slight increase of self-respect when I contemplated the shining array.

Of course I supposed the change would come some day, but I had never dwelt upon the difference it would make because I knew so well it would carry with it none of those material advantages which an

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inherited fortune confers along with an increase of social status.

My first Christmas morning on board ship went off merrily ; but it was our last festivity together, for the Squadron sailed for the West Indies in the first week of January, and the ensuing loneliness was only accentuated by the fact that it followed three months of happy companionship.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE PRINCESS HÔTEL

I HAD been warned by people of experience that I should find Bermuda, and particularly the western end where I lived, a perfect hot-bed of gossip, so I chose my topics of conversation with the utmost care when calling or being called upon and scarcely permitted myself to discuss anything more personal than the birds and flowers and the price of food. After I had lived for a few months at Boaz I came to the conclusion that most of the gossip was started and carried by the coloured servants, who, with few exceptions, devoted the larger part of their time to running improvised errands and attending weddings and funerals. Naval and military families rarely get the best servants in the colonies ; only those who love change better than long service are available for

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immigrants like ourselves, and a lady who expected a satisfactory character or reference before engaging a servant in Bermuda was regarded as offering a deliberate insult to the Rosalie or Blanche who condescended to offer her services. So when the ship went south and my husband's cheerful and obliging retinue of men departed with him I had to provide myself with two dark-skinned ladies, and much did I suffer at their hands. If Blanche resented my criticisms she would avenge her wrongs by flavouring every dish with paraffin. If I reproved Rosalie for leaving mosquitoes inside my net she would absent herself without warning from noon to midnight and meet me in the morning with some tale of a death-bed or a funeral which I was free to doubt but powerless to call an invention. When my bill for groceries at the Canteen showed that twelve pounds of lump sugar had been purchased in a week Blanche protested that every morsel had been consumed by myself, but a neighbour of experience did more than hint that Blanche's mother in Somerset would be making loquat jam at about the time of this phenomenal expenditure. When my coal-black laundress with the arms of a prize-fighter brought home my table-linen stained with port I suggested that these stains could have been removed with boiling water. "I nebber using boiling water, lady," was Mrs. Jugg's retort; "boiling water too bad for de health. Always I washes in cold water." Later I discovered that the washing aristocracy of Somerset made a practice of entertaining their friends at supper on Sunday evenings, and that at their tables

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much port was drunk (and spilt) on *our* tablecloths, which were never restored to us until Monday !

Frequently I went to bed in a servantless house with the backdoor unlocked, because I knew I should have no servants at all if I dared to turn the key upon them, and remonstrance was worse than useless. So ruinous did I find my housekeeping, so uncomfortable my meals and so irritating the knowledge that I was completely in the hands of Blanche and Rosalie that I determined to give up my pleasant and airy bungalow and find a room in one of the big hotels at Hamilton, where I should be decently fed, reasonably charged, and adequately waited on by the whitest of white Americans.

I established myself early in March at the Princess Hôtel, a large, much veranda'd building set right on the harbour close to Hamilton. I was lucky in having already made the acquaintance of Mrs. Julius Catlin and her two daughters who were staying at the hotel, for they had brought with them an introduction from a mutual friend, and Captain Arthur Clarke of the *Magicienne* was also living there while his ship was in dockyard hands. I was therefore not entirely friendless, but as I unpacked and arranged my belongings before going down to lunch I looked forward with considerable alarm to the plunge I was about to make into a little world of strange faces, smart frocks, and high-pitched voices where I should be the only Englishwoman. Suddenly, from the room next to mine proceeded a man's voice humming "The British Grenadiers" ! The humming broke off and started

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again perhaps a dozen times, stopping altogether when the lunch-bell rang long and loud. With the inspiring tune in my head and wondering very much who had put it there I stepped bravely forth and found my way to the dining-room, into which I was literally swept by a tide of laughing, chattering women. Mrs. Catlin and her girls were on the look-out for me, and I seated myself with them at a table where there were six places. "Mr. and Mrs. Rudyard Kipling sit with us," said Mrs. Catlin; "they came by the same boat with us." That seemed to explain the "British Grenadiers," but till the "Jungle Book" was published I did not know just why my neighbour upstairs had been buzzing away like an industrious bee, with pauses for honey-gathering, before the lunch-bell rang.

It was not long before the awe with which I regarded the "great little Man" dissolved into a liking which cordially included his slender, bright-eyed wife; but the week during which we were table-mates was far too short. Mr. Kipling never saved up his good things for his books, but was as original and surprising as possible, and infinitely more kindly than his often sarcastic pen had led me to expect. Indeed I shall never forget how good he was to me when I confessed I tried to earn a little money by writing. It was rash but delightful of him to give me an introduction to the editor of a well-known American serial. This I made use of when sending a five-thousand words sketch of life (as I saw it) in Bermuda to the editor in question, but the sketch was returned with a request that I would "enliven it with a few personalities." I did not

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comply with this request, but had I done so I should have been the richer by a good many dollars. I had my own little standard and intended to adhere to it, so the article went to a poverty-stricken English monthly of quite unimpeachable respectability, and brought in two pounds ten shillings !

Mr. Charles Dudley Warner was at Bermuda in 1894—a very charming old man, simple, kindly, and interesting to talk to. He, also, gave me a letter to the editor of a famous American magazine, but in it the writer most unfortunately referred to me as “ the wife of Lord Poore.” I simply could not find it in my heart to point out the blunder to Mr. Dudley Warner, and it was equally impossible to approach an editor under false pretences, so I never used it.

I have not often met Mr. and Mrs. Kipling since those days, but it always gives me what, for want of a better word, I call a *bubbly* feeling to be with them. I want to ask questions and to listen at the same time, and not waste an instant of such precious company ; and when they are gone I can't remember one half of what has passed. In February, 1916, they came out from Bath with their daughter to see me at Winsley. I was as excited and elated by their visit as I had every right to be, and next day on meeting an acquaintance I boasted to her of my piece of good luck. “ They stayed two hours ! ” I said, in the certainty of being congratulated and envied. “ Really ? how nice ! ” was the only comment the lady made. And then in a tone of intense relief and satisfaction she cried, “ Congratulate me ! I have actually got a cook *at last*. All

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the servants are taking up munition work nowadays, etc., etc." The wind was indeed taken out of my sails. *I* had merely met the greatest little man I know, and his most adequate wife ; *she* had found a cook. Being not without sympathy born of experience, I rejoiced with the cook-finder ; but if the Chef from the *Tour d'Argent* should ever call upon me I shall have my revenge, for I will keep his visit dark, and the recipes he gives me shall be copied out in cipher and locked up in my cash-box.

CHAPTER XLIV

AN ESCAPADE

I MADE the acquaintance of several very agreeable Americans at Bermuda in the spring of 1894. Mrs. Catlin, whose country home was near Morristown, N.J., asked me to stay with her on my way to Halifax in the summer, and I was also invited to Newhaven and to Cononicut, near Newport, R.I. But, pleasant as I found my American acquaintances in the hôtel, their habit of talking in chorus was bewildering, and their vocabulary provided surprises for which Mr. Lowell's admirable essay on our common language had not prepared me.

As I was waiting in the dog-cart of a friend outside the house of Bermuda's principal dressmaker I was

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cast into confusion by the remark of a pretty American girl who had just emerged from it: "I think *my waist* is under the seat. They put it in the dog-cart by mistake." I know that it is just as odd to talk of the *body* of a dress instead of the *bodice*, but *waist* took me quite by surprise. Later on the same pretty girl told me she was on the way to the house of Mrs. X., with a pattern, "because she wants to have a *waist* like mine." Now Mrs. X. weighed thirteen stone, and it was a physical impossibility that she should ever acquire a waist like that of Miss Daisy N., who was most elegantly slim, so I burst into a fit of laughter which I am certain was, in my hearer's opinion, quite uncalled for.

Before I left Bermuda for Halifax, *viâ* the United States, I spent a week at Government House with General and Mrs. Lyons. The Governor was extremely like the late Duke of Cambridge in appearance, very punctilious, beautifully turned out and rather irascible. His only daughter was just engaged to be married to Captain Dowell of the Berkshire Regiment, and when after dinner one evening these young people were otherwise occupied, Mrs. Lyons resting in an armchair after an exhausting headache and the Governor in his study, Mr. Fisher-Rowe, the A.D.C., tempted me to go out with him in his skiff, and I fell. It was such a heavenly moonlight night, and I *did* obtain Mrs. Lyons' consent before I slipped upstairs for a cloak, and then out of the garden gate and away to the cove where the boat lay. We pulled round to Clarence Cove and paid an unceremonious and most

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pleasant visit to Sir John Hopkins, who was then living *en garçon* at Admiralty House. Perhaps we stayed too long, but we could easily have been back at Government House by ten o'clock had we not stuck hard and fast upon a rock like a gridiron. The coral rocks of that sea have no convenient padding of weed, and their edges and points are as sharp as knives and arrowheads. Mr. Rowe took off his shoes and socks and went over the side, but though he shoved his hardest and I shifted my weight from one spot to another it was a quarter of an hour before we got off. We raced up to the house to find the Governor awaiting our return in much displeasure. "Mrs. Lyons has already retired," he said, as he handed me my bedroom candlestick. "Had you invited me to do so I should have been happy to join your boating excursion." (He meant escapade, not excursion.) I could not say "We should never have got off that rock if you had"; besides, I was far too much frightened to think of any repartee, and I know I faltered "I am very sorry, Your Exigency," as I accepted the candlestick and the reproof. It was long before the word "Excellency" came trippingly from my tongue. Only three years of constant practice in Australia taught me to say it neatly.

Next day the Governor himself drove me in his mail-phæton to a rifle-meeting, and I did my best to efface the memory of a lapse to which he kindly made no allusion. It cannot have been the impropriety of my conduct that called down his rebuke, for A.D.C.'s and flag-lieutenants always enjoy brevet rank as

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chaperons. Mr. Rowe was a charming and light-hearted young Guardsman, several years my junior, and no objection was raised to his taking me out in a very high dog-cart behind a tandem of chestnuts—a really risky proceeding, for the leader was a fiend who used to curl round and bite the less excitable wheeler instead of minding his own business. Many years afterwards I met Mr. Fisher-Rowe again at a big ball at Portsmouth to which he had taken his bride, and we laughed together over the “regrettable incident” which had made us co-delinquents in General Lyons’ eyes. He rejoined his regiment when war broke out in 1914, and was, alas ! killed in the following year.

CHAPTER XLV

AMERICAN IMPRESSIONS

I STARTED bravely enough for New York before the end of May and went at once to Mrs. Catlin’s at Morristown. The voyage had been, of course, rough, and we had a cargo of onions on board ! As my luggage had spent about forty-eight hours in the same hold with these useful vegetables every garment my boxes contained reeked of them and had to be hung or spread out in a bare attic with every window widely opened for days before it could be worn. It was an outrage on the hospitality of my hostess which I was power-

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less to prevent, and I felt humiliated to find myself the means of infecting her beautiful house with so plebeian an odour.

The weather should have been warm and fine at this season, but it was miserably cold and wet for the first ten days of my visit. Then it rushed to the other extreme, and I shall never forget seating myself in the landau which was to take us to church on a blazing June morning and bouncing up again from the burning cushions. It was as though I had sat down on the top of a kitchen range. New Jersey mosquitoes are famous, and fine green wire gauze protected every window, so that our nights were airless as well as hot. The climax came with a stupendous thunderstorm. Mrs. Catlin and her elder daughter were in New York that day, and as I was washing my hands before lunch a bang, not a clap, resounded through the house, and I felt this was indeed a real typical American storm far surpassing anything I had experienced in Europe. Pattering feet and agitated voices in the passage succeeded the bang, and then Edith Catlin appeared. "Do you know anything about telephones, Lady Poore?" "Nothing good or useful," I admitted. "Something has happened to ours. It's blown up, I think, and I've sent for James." (James, a delightful Sligo man, was the coachman.) The lightning really had blown up the telephone! When James arrived he said his "mind misgave him through the smell of fire that was in it," so he promptly sopped his coat in a bucket of water and thrust it down the gaping hole where the box had been, extinguishing the fire caused

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by the ignition of the paraffin-cotton coating of the wires, and we breathed again.

While I was in Morristown I learnt a lot of American. I mastered the names and functions of the different vehicles employed: the Surrey, the rockaway, the buckboard, the buggy, and one other which I have forgotten. I learnt to call the stable the barn, and that one should say *gaits* and not *paces* in speaking of a horse's methods of progression. I drank ice-cream soda flavoured with sarsaparilla at the chemist's and ate chocolates spoilt with "winter-green." In Morristown I saw a fishmonger's shop with "SEA FOOD" painted over the door, and rather expected to find mermaids selling seaweed within. I learnt to my surprise that *Zee* was the last letter of the alphabet and *spannle* the correct pronunciation of *spaniel*; that it was quite usual to say "I'll go a little *ways* along the road with you," and that nobody was thought the worse of for saying "I don't know *as* I do." As regards *Zee*, I was first incredulous and then annoyed about it, for although the great Webster gives it precedence of *Zed* in his dictionary I can hear no sound of appropriate finality in *Zee*. One might as well pronounce dead, *dee*; and if one did it simply wouldn't mean dead.

Another thing that surprised me was the veranda life of a town like Morristown. Good-sized houses were just placed on a pocket-handkerchief of beautifully cared-for lawn, like a large cake on a small plate, and were quite unscreened from the passer-by by walls or hedges. Upon the veranda were gathered the family

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and its friends, as much *en evidence* as the occupants of a box on the grand tier of an opera-house. Going into New York by train was a trial in hot weather ; but I found it was possible, though painful, to travel in a car seating forty people without asphyxiation, although every window was closed and the thermometer at about 95°. This was a very crumpled rose leaf, but the other rose leaves were velvety and delicately hued. The elaborate comfort of American housekeeping and the elaborate elegance of the women's dressing were fully up to expectations raised by a careful perusal of American fiction.

After a very pleasant month at Morristown I went to Greenwich, Conn., to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Donaldson, whose sister and daughter we had met in Switzerland in 1891. They were an attractive family, kind, hospitable, and wholesome, but they breakfasted every morning at *a quarter past seven* so that Mr. Donaldson and his eldest son, a boy of about seventeen, should take the business men's train to New York. It was trying to start one's social day so early, and the hours between breakfast and lunch were, for an idle visitor like myself, too long. By one o'clock I had become physically and mentally inane, and when no less than eight phenomenally "bright" ladies (bright is an American expression I do not like) came one hot day to lunch I had reached such a pitch of imbecility that I was stricken with aphasia and said, "How do you be?" instead of "How do you do?" to the brightest of the assembled guests! I feared she would feel compelled to remonstrate later with my hostess on

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having picked up such a very queer English friend, but I confessed to Miss Donaldson the trick my tongue had played me and she quite condoned the offence. Among American women, "bright," alert, competent and very well dressed, I always felt myself slow-witted, under-vitalised, unpardonably unpractical, indifferently educated and completely lacking in finish; *tête-à-tête* I found them delightful, but a crowd stultified me hopelessly. Only when a big, dull girl came to tea at a house where I was staying and sang "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms" very badly to a guitar did I regain a fragment of confidence in my own value. To find that not all Americans were clever and graceful was an unspeakable comfort, and I could have kissed her large pink hands for gratitude, for no one with an ounce of imagination or a pennyweight of aptness could sing Moore's melodies to a guitar; such a person would be capable of going out to dine in her wedding veil or of throwing a bunch of snowdrops to a toreador.

While at Newhaven I visited Yale University under the guidance of young Mr. Ansel Phelps, a charming boy with crinkly yellow hair who had been staying at Morristown during my visit to Mrs. Catlin. He took me one morning to Chapel, where the religious service, conducted by the Principal, was one of the least impressive I ever witnessed. The Principal in a black gown stood upon a dais opposite the high gallery reserved for strangers, and the seats in the body of the oblong hall were filled with members of the University facing the dais. While he was reading the psalms a con-

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siderable number of the younger men turned their backs upon him and facing the "Strangers' Gallery" regarded its occupants with critical eyes. Then, when the service was over and the Principal was passing down the narrow central aisle on his way out, all the men whose places were next the aisle bowed low from the waist *at* him, as though they were trying to hit the poor man with their heads. He was fortunately so thin that no one succeeded.

Next day I went to tea in Mr. Phelps' rooms and met a number of cheerful young men whose craze for the moment was the collection of brass plates which they wrenched by night from the house doors or railings displaying them. The plates of doctors and dentists were numerous, and there were some "Modes et Robes," a few bearing the names of boarding-houses and several with "Do not ring unless an answer is required" upon them. Americans seem to have a passion for making collections of all sorts, and many consider that all is fair in this pursuit. It certainly takes nerve to unscrew, or wrench off, a doctor's plate without the cognizance of his household or the police, and with almost every trophy exhibited to me that afternoon at Yale some absurd or exciting story of its capture was connected, so there was some sport in the proceeding, however reprehensible it might be in the eyes of the authorities.

At Newhaven I met a very important lady whose mission in life I understood to be the preservation of the Ancient Monuments of Connecticut. British ignorance of the onerous nature of her work was responsible for my asking if she found much to do.

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“Do!” she exclaimed; “there are eighty-eight of us in this State alone engaged in historical and genealogical research. Cases are constantly coming before us of persons anxious to establish their connection with the original families of Connecticut, and we have to sift the evidence and make endless investigations.” I was silent, because I knew that my views on the subject would be even less pardonable than my ignorance of the magnitude of her task. I cannot now recollect the name of the organisation of which this lady was the head in her State. Perhaps it was the Colonial Dames.

I was destined to meet many American ladies equally interested in genealogy, their own and their neighbours'. Of these one gravely assured me that her husband was heir to an Irish peerage, *but the necessary condition of permanent residence in the British Isles deterred him from establishing his claim!* The title in question was then blamelessly borne by a peer of great respectability who is still living. That American ladies have to draw lines of their own to distinguish themselves and their equals from the *hoi-polloi* is one of the disadvantages arising from a republican form of government. It is certainly more convenient to be simply labelled “Duchess,” “Countess,” and so on, and officially registered in “Debrett,” whose pages now contain the names of many an erstwhile Colonial Dame or Daughter of the Republic.

The aristocracy of intellect in America is no less exclusive, if my informants are to be believed, than that of birth, and the old story of the Boston lady who

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discovered a moss-grown milestone bearing the inscription *Im. from Boston*, illustrates its limitations delightfully. She read upon it "I'm from Boston," and, in the belief that the milestone was a tombstone, exclaimed, "How simple and how sufficient!"

From Newhaven I went to Cononicut, an island close to Newport, where I spent some happy days with Mr. and Mrs. Hazard and their son and daughter. Cononicut was then a striking contrast to Newport. There one could lead the simple life in salt air and sunshine, (I hope it still maintains its independence and *naïveté*,) and we crossed the ferry and gazed upon the great palaces of Newport with becoming awe, calculating how many hundreds of thousands of dollars each huge building had cost and how many more went to its upkeep. Inadequate, if immaculate, lawns surrounded these prominent palaces, and in front of them a grassy plain extended to the cliffs which overhung the open sea. I wondered whether their owners really enjoyed the life of dressing and dining, dancing and dollar-worship which the newspapers took such pride in describing. Perhaps they fled to some other rendezvous of the super-rich before the expensive delights of Newport began to pall.

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CHAPTER XLVI

HALIFAX

AT Halifax, whither I proceeded from Cononicut, I had hoped to meet my husband, whose ship was on the way up from the West Indies, but the poor decrepit little *Tourmaline* kept me waiting a week, and without the protecting kindness of Commander H. Fleet, of the *Tartar*, and his wife I should have hated my first experience of a boarding-house full to bursting point of conflicting elements to which the safety-valve of private sitting-rooms was denied. But the Fleets were very good to me. Commander Fleet was a brother of "Rutland Barrington," whose name is inseparably associated with Gilbert and Sullivan's greatest successes, and was himself a clever actor and incurable *farceur*. It was, however, the something that so frequently lies hidden under the comedian's mask that made me his friend, and Mrs. Fleet's pleasant equanimity provided the exact counterpoise needed by a man of his mercurial temperament. Their six-year-old son, Aylmer, was a most engaging person and full of character. One day he bit a little girl of twelve because she had insisted on kissing him. This was, of course, a terrible crime on Aylmer's part, but his friends appreciated the manly feeling which inspired it. "Will you have a whipping, Aylmer, or shall mother take the good conduct badge off the sleeve of your jumper?" asked his father. "A whipping, please,

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father," was the answer, and Aylmer was whipped ; but it was the effusive little girl, in my opinion, who deserved chastisement.

Mrs. Fleet and I went to tea on board the flagship, *Blake*, one afternoon, and Aylmer, by special invitation, accompanied us. He was jubilant until we got into the steamboat. Then his face fell, and all the time we were on board the *Blake* he clung closely to his pretty mother's side. I could not account for this change of mood, but as we were going ashore Mrs. Fleet told me that poor Aylmer's pleasure had been completely spoilt when he found he was not in " the rig of the day." The *Blake's* men were in blues ; Aylmer was in whites ! When, much to my regret, Mrs. Fleet and Aylmer left Halifax a few months later I went to see them off. The flag-captain's coxswain had taken Mrs. Hamilton's luggage on board the steamer, and when the order " All for the shore " was given Aylmer, who had wound himself desperately round one of Wilson's long legs, had to be detached by force. If ever a child's heart was wholly given to the Service it was the heart of Aylmer Fleet.

The *Tourmalines* were glad enough to come north after more than six months in the tropics, where they had remained after the rest of the Squadron had returned to Bermuda in the spring, and the charming surroundings of Halifax, an ugly place in itself, afforded them a welcome amount of fishing and shooting as well as lawn-tennis. In August Lord Aberdeen, Governor-General of Canada, visited Halifax with Lady Aberdeen, and dinner and garden parties of the

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customary official nature were given in their honour. Their Excellencies' chief contribution to the ceremonial gaieties took the form of a Drawing Room held at the Town Hall. It was attended by ladies of many classes, and the variety of their costumes made the function more interesting, if less imposing, than its prototypes at Buckingham Palace. Coloured feathers decked the heads of some of the ladies presented, and it was said, though we did not credit the story, that one matron, over-anxious to do the right thing, actually *entered* the "Throne Room" backwards!

Some of us naval ladies fell with our husbands into deep disgrace on the occasion of the Drawing Room, though we were innocent of any intention to offend. A number of us had been invited a week or more earlier, and before there was any talk of a Drawing Room, to dine with Sir John Hopkins, our Commander-in-Chief, at Admiralty House to meet Admiral Count de Maigret, commanding a French Training Squadron visiting Halifax. Sir John explained to the Governor-General the impossibility of postponing his party, but arranged to dine at so early an hour that he and his guests would be able to put in an appearance at the Town Hall by a quarter to nine. After a merry dinner and a hurried rehearsal of our curtseys, with the two Admirals representing Viceroyalty, we repaired to the Town Hall, preceded by Sir John and Admiral de Maigret, and when we had shaken ourselves out and adjusted our snowy plumes and veils we ladies rejoined our lords and in a compact body, all light-hearted and smiling, made our way to the great hall.

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The door was locked, the hall was empty, and ere we had fully realised the situation an irate private secretary burst out of another room, closed the door behind him, and confronted our party. "The Drawing Room is over. Their Excellencies are partaking of light refreshments. You are too late," cried the cross little man. "Besides, I do not know if any of these ladies have the private *entrée*." "If we are not welcome we can go," said the flag-captain (the late Rear-Admiral W. des Vœux Hamilton), bristling with rage. Right about face he turned, and the rest of us followed suit. "Private *entrée*! What on earth does he mean?" we were asking one another, feeling like naughty children who, fresh from some uproarious game, find themselves late for prayers.

Upon this painful scene appeared an official dove bearing an olive branch. "I am sure their Excellencies will be delighted to see you in the supper-room," said Mr. Fielding (then Premier of Nova Scotia) in the friendliest manner. "The Drawing Room did not last quite so long as her Excellency anticipated." Captain Hamilton halted; we did likewise. He relented; we did the same; and, piloted and announced by Mr. Fielding, we entered the room where Lord and Lady Aberdeen and all the civil and military notabilities of Halifax were assembled. We made our curtsies and our bows to the best of our ability, and nothing could have been more amiable and forgiving than their Excellencies. Then, recklessly piling the Pelion of supper on the Ossa of an admirable dinner we found ourselves eating ices and drinking champagne at

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nine p.m. with the personages whose dignity our behaviour had flouted. Presently I edged myself in alongside the General's wife. "Dreadful of us to be so late," I remarked cheerfully, "wasn't it?" The General's wife turned a petrifying eye upon me as she replied with blighting emphasis, "Dr-r-readful, perfectly drreadful!"

CHAPTER XLVII

QUEBEC, MONTREAL, NIAGARA

It was not long before a general move was made from Halifax to Quebec, and the British Squadron was followed thither by that of Admiral de Maigret. This officer, who was later Commander-in-Chief of the French Mediterranean Fleet, was a man of fine character and great personal charm, but it was not very easy for a Frenchman to forget that Canada had been French before it became a British possession, and he was often made to feel by tactless persons of the blatantly British type that the old *régime* was by them forgotten, the old connection ignored. "Il n'y a que Sir John qui a le don de me faire oublier le passé," he once said to me. And yet Sir John Hopkins was no courtier. It was the simple good feeling of an officer and a gentleman which enabled him to establish and maintain perfectly cordial relations with a French

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admiral visiting Quebec, a place full of painful historical interest for a patriotic Frenchman.

"C'est nous qui vous préparons vos colonies," said M. Kleczowski, French Consul-General at Quebec, to me one day, and he was historically accurate. Their losses of colonial territory have come to the French mainly through their passionate attachment to the soil of France. They fought as bravely and as brilliantly as we did for India and Canada, but their colonists live like exiles, unrooted in the alien soil, while ours *settle* and will die happy in the country of their adoption so long as the Union Jack floats overhead.

Quebec deserves a special shrine in the memory of all who have seen it. The peculiar charm permeating it is due to our French predecessors who chose its site and designed its streets and buildings, just as the beauty and vivacity of its women is inherited from them. French, in a somewhat archaic form, is the language of its people whose politeness and suavity have survived one hundred and thirty-four years of British rule, and to the French Ursuline Convent the flower of Quebec's maidens, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, go for their education.

The Governor-General and Lady Aberdeen, in residence at the Citadel during the visit of the two squadrons to Quebec, gave a great ball in their honour. I have danced at many public balls and many official ones, but never have I taken part in a worse-danced set of Lancers than that performed on this occasion. I was fortunately paired off with the Comte de Maigret,

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but my husband had been told off to dance with Mrs. Hamilton, wife of the flag-captain, who was then no nearer Quebec than Halifax! Urged by a worried A.D.C. to find a substitute at the last moment, Dick chose a very pretty American girl standing close by who was qualified neither by seniority nor nationality to figure in the "Lanciers d'Honneur." After the music had begun her Excellency advanced hurriedly to consult his Excellency, her *vis-à-vis*, as to whether she or Lady Hopkins were "First Lady," a proceeding which gave the dance a bad start. The French Admiral and I steadily pursued our allotted course in spite of a very discouraging want of attention on the part of our "corners," and until the intricacies of the Grand Chain with its "inside, outside" gave us pause we had reason to be proud of our performance. Then the late Lord Swansea, a man of considerable bulk, elected, regardless of the impassioned remonstrances of A.D.C.'s and the frequent collisions created by his independent conduct, to take the opposite course to that recommended and, indeed, indispensable, and with every repetition of the figure confusion was worse confounded. It was a *débâcle* never to be forgotten, and I hardly dared meet the eye of my dignified partner lest I should read in it surprise or disapproval.

From Quebec the British Squadron proceeded to Montreal, where, with my sister-in-law, Kate Poore, who was now staying with us, I rejoined my husband. There were various great doings of which the review remains a painful memory, for, after sailors and marines had done their part, the City Fire Brigade gave an

QUEBEC, MONTREAL, NIAGARA

exhibition of their prowess and efficiency. Cataracts of water spouted from their hoses, sprinkling and even drenching bluejackets, marines, and spectators impartially—and it was *not* good for the marines' best red tunics.

Our five ships were thrown open to the public, and as they lay alongside the wharves a miscellaneous crowd of sightseers provided with baskets of food invaded them and spent hours on board. One of these visitors, after very deliberately sharpening his pen-knife, sat down on the sacred quarter-deck of the *Tourmaline* and began to carve his name on a plank. He did not get far. I myself found a small boy of inquiring mind endeavouring to prize up the cover of the binnacle and reported the young delinquent to a firm quartermaster who carried him off protesting vigorously.

Montreal, fine city as it is, can never rival Quebec, whose time-honoured dignity places it above any modern town, and when Kate and I went on to Niagara we did not leave much of our hearts behind us.

At Niagara we spent three entire days, and each day showed us the majesty of the Falls under different conditions. We saw them first when blazing sunshine from a blue sky turned the falling water into a transparent veil of sapphire fringed with silver spray. The shadowed depths beyond the spray presented the steel-blue surface of ice, arabesqued with whirling eddies; the great trees of the neighbouring forest clad in the grey-green foliage of August were unstirred

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by any breeze, and the booming thunder of the Falls struck heavily upon the ear. Next morning thick smoke from a forest fire enveloped all but the foreground, lead-coloured water patterned with dull white lay at our feet, and the sapphire of the Falls had changed to the dingy green of bottle-glass. A chord, unheard by us before, a minor chord, prolonged and organ-toned, came to our ears in the roar of the water and turned our thoughts to melancholy. But the third day dawned brightly. A strong wind had swept away the volumes of pungent smoke, and white clouds drove swiftly across a deep-blue sky. Sunshine and shadow chased each other over the crinkling surface of the lower waters, and the whirlpools boiled black at the foot of the Falls.

A diminutive steamer with the horse-power of an ocean liner carried us safely to within a few yards of the descending flood. Trussed up in the tight oilskins served out to all on board, even Kate's elegant form looked for all the world like a shiny black sausage, and there was nothing at all surprising in our falling down and rolling upon the deck, slippery with spray, when the steamer began to back and twist in her fight with the cross-currents. Mr. Macalister, Commander of the *Partridge*, who accompanied us, picked us up gallantly and propped us against convenient stanchions, but with the next squirm of the boat we fell down and rolled once more, our uncontrollable laughter making it harder than ever for him to "up-end" and secure us a second time. I must admit that we felt guilty of *lèse majesté*. To giggle with Niagara looking on was

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a positive crime, but the utter absurdity of our appearance and the grotesqueness of our involuntary antics would have upset the gravity of a cathedral verger.

That night we returned to Montreal, whence, by special permission of the Commander-in-Chief, we went down as passengers on board the *Tourmaline* to Quebec. The two days' trip down the St. Lawrence in perfect weather was restful enough after our long railway journey, and we arrived at Quebec to hear that the ship was to stop there during the remainder of the Governor-General's visit. So we gladly went back to our old quarters at the Château Frontenac Hôtel and resumed our pleasant relations with the friendly people of the beautiful old city. By way of returning their hospitality the *Tourmalines* gave a "sing-song" at the hôtel, and the musical and dramatic talent of the ship was drawn upon to provide an acceptable entertainment. It was really a capital performance, and the best items of a very varied programme were a clog-dance by one of the galley's crew and a short recitation by a signalman. Their Excellencies were present, and as soon as the sing-song was over they were fed and sped. Their hosts had unkindly concealed from them that there would be a sequel to the concert in the shape of a dance, which proved as gay and enjoyable as the light heels and hearts of the officers and their pretty Canadian partners could make it. And the A.D.C. who had conveyed his principals back to the Citadel returned and danced too!

As most people are aware, Lord and Lady Aberdeen

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held peculiar views regarding servants, and it was known that weekly entertainments, at which their Excellencies were present, were given for the amusement of the domestic staff at the Governor-General's. Nevertheless my husband was surprised to receive a pressing invitation for the two bluejackets who had distinguished themselves at our sing-song to perform at one of these "Admirable Crichton" *soirées*. It so happened that neither of the men was able to accept this invitation. Some slight dereliction of duty had temporarily debarred them from the enjoyment of their personal freedom, and Lord Aberdeen's offer to *provide a military escort* for the two bluejackets he desired to honour was respectfully declined by their outraged captain.

Of Lord and Lady Aberdeen's *bonne volonté* one can entertain no doubt, but their suitability to uphold the prestige of the Crown, whether in Canada or Ireland, has never been apparent.

Late in September we returned to Halifax to find our boarding-house still crowded with people whom prolonged intimacy had failed to domesticate, and early in the following month I was glad to find myself once more in the sunshine of Bermuda.

BERMUDA AGAIN

CHAPTER XLVIII

BERMUDA AGAIN

FOR the winter and spring of 1894—95 I had taken a small cottage in the suburbs of Hamilton and by a stroke of luck secured the services of an English maid-servant as capable as she was handsome. Indeed, I was as comfortable as I could wish for the eight or nine months I spent under Julia's care.

“ How happy could I be again
If I had no one else but Jane ! ”

was a rhyme quoted to me long ago by some rich woman who had been mistress of but one servant in her early days ; and I could truly say

“ I lived in comfort quite peculiar
When I had no one else but Julia-r ! ”

But my handsome Julia married in the following summer, and I gave her away with considerable reluctance to her most fortunate bridegroom.

The *Tourmaline* arrived at Bermuda a few weeks after I was installed at Tourmaline Cottage (so christened with a lamentable want of originality by myself), but before we had time to enjoy our small and brilliant garden, with its lovely pomegranate trees, its “ shell ” roses of soft and delicate pink, and its bold violets which never hid their blossoms under their

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leaves, the ship was ordered up to Newfoundland, and I was left lamenting. Fires, famine and rioting had made the presence of a man-of-war necessary in the bleak and inhospitable climate of Newfoundland, and for seven months the ship remained there. But for the domestic peace and comfort ensured by the ministrations of my treasured Julia, and the superior social amenities provided by a more central residence than the bungalow at Boaz Island I should have been very forlorn. However, Colonel E. T. Dickson,* commanding the Berkshire Regiment at Prospect, and his wife adopted the naval derelict stranded not much more than a mile from their doors, and my happiest hours were spent in their company. Indeed, I was far from being a recluse. I danced and sailed, and rowed and played tennis with cheerful young people, and was only seriously depressed when I sat alone on chilly evenings in my fireplaceless drawing-room while Julia entertained her *fiancé* in the cosy kitchen.

The winter and spring of 1895 were marked by no event of importance, but a big tourist-carrying liner, the *Lusitania*, I think, brought a welcome old friend in the person of Mrs. Wilton Alhusen (who, as Ada Vandeleur, had helped my sister Rosy to paint the steward's pig green in the 'seventies) to my door, and I drove about and saw the sights in her company. Chief among these were the great fields of Bermuda lilies in bloom at Mr. W. T. James' bulb gardens. Cannas in infinite variety and exquisite gladioli are

* Now General.

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also grown wholesale for export in Bermuda, and I was glad to introduce a customer to Mr. James, who, with his wife, had shown me many a kindness.

The party on board the *Lusitania* was large and, of course, mixed, but comprised at least one celebrity—the late Mr. W. S. Gilbert, and Mrs. Alhusen told me that in a “ Limerick ” competition on board the veteran rhymester had inevitably won the first prize. As I do not suppose this somewhat grisly production has ever been published I give it here :—

“ There was a young lady of Malta
Who strung up her aunt with a halter.
She said ‘ I won’t bury her ;
She shall feed my fox terrier,
And she’ll keep for a month if I salt her.’ ”

Captain Mahan, in command of a United States cruiser, visited Bermuda a little later, and I was bidden, much to my delight, to dine and sleep at Ireland Island where the Captain-in-Charge and Mrs. Brackenbury were about to entertain the very distinguished American at dinner. But as I went in with my host I sat as far away as possible from the guest of the evening, and chance befriended me not at all when we were in the drawing-room, so I only carried away an impression of a smart and well set up officer with a pleasant voice and quite unleonine manners.

At this period the Naval Hospital at Ireland Island was in the charge of Dr. Thomas Browne, Deputy-Inspector-General, an old friend and shipmate of my husband’s, and the cheerful company of his six daughters, from little Winnie, aged four, to Bessie and Louie,

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just grown up, added to the unaffected and never-failing hospitality of their parents, made of their house a haven of peace and contentment. Once or twice I spent a week under their roof, and when Julia had married and left me and I was tired of hôtels, I stayed with them for six steaming weeks of early autumn.

The Deputy-Inspector-General's house was much more than an official residence. Countless lonely people and shy people, and even stiff people, were cheered or comforted or thawed by its genial atmosphere. One knew one might drop in to lunch at "Château Browne" without causing a famine, and its unostentatious dinner-parties never attained the bleak altitude of ceremonial banquets. Not even the irruption of a host of fugitives from the Dockyard when a fire broke out near the powder magazine could overtax Mrs. Browne's hospitality, and mattresses and pillows, as well as ample refreshment, were found for those who absolutely refused to "go home till morning." It was related that one nimble lady from Dockyard Terrace fled without stopping all the way to Somerset Ferry, something under two miles. Before reaching the Ferry she met the wife of a naval officer whose ship was lying in dock within the danger zone. "Where is your husband?" asked this lady (who was heading for the Dockyard) of the breathless fugitive. "I don't know, I'm sure," panted Mrs. X——, "this is no time to think of husbands," and on she went. Fear had given legs, if not wings, to the aged and even bedridden inhabitants of the western-

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most portion of Ireland Island, and one very old woman arose from the couch she had not quitted for five years, hastily donned a pair of her son's slippers (having no footgear of her own), and joined the exodus. She also made her way at top speed to the Ferry. How she returned I never heard.

In stormy weather communication by water between Ireland Island and Hamilton was difficult, and a long twelve miles by road, bridge, and ferry was the only alternative route, so there were days when nothing better than a very imperfect telephone system connected the bulk of Ireland's inhabitants with the capital. Many were the stories told of messages mutilated or misdirected, but quite the best was related to me by Mr. Thrupp, a subaltern of artillery filling the post of "firemaster," whatever that may mean, at Boaz.

One stormy morning at about ten o'clock he was rung up on the telephone, and the question "Have you any beef?" surprised his attentive ear. "No," he replied, "I have no beef." "Have you any mutton?" followed. "No, I have no mutton," said Mr. Thrupp, with Ollendorffian monotony. "Well, then, have you any veal or lamb?" "No," he answered curtly. "*And you call yourself a butcher!*" said the voice conveying, even through the telephone, the contempt of his female interlocutor. "*I don't,*" roared Mr. Thrupp; "I'm Thrupp, of the Royal Artillery," and rang off.

It was not very long before I left Bermuda for good that I spent a week at St. George's. This old-fashioned little town is situated at the easterly end of the group,

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and its forts command the Narrows, the only passage for ships of other than negligible tonnage entering and leaving Bermuda. In its Georgian church I found a noteworthy memorial tablet to a resident of long ago. It was the votive offering of a disconsolate widow, careless or unfortunate enough to preface the text that followed a comprehensive catalogue of the deceased's virtues with the picturesque interjection, *Alas!* It reads therefore :—

“ *Alas!* he is not lost but gone before,”

and the inevitable inference made by the reader is that the bereaved lady regretted her lord was not lost for good but had only preceded her to a world where she might some day be called upon to rejoin him.

CHAPTER XLIX

PORT ROYAL AND KINGSTON

IN June, 1895, the *Tourmaline* had paid a visit of three weeks to Bermuda on her way to the West Indies, and we spent all the time at my husband's disposal in gardening at Cedar House (a large, cool dwelling whither I had removed from Tourmaline Cottage when the hot weather came) and boating among the adjacent islands. I, personally, was far from satisfied with the treatment meted out to the

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Tourmaline by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir James Erskine, for I had had little more than a bowing acquaintance with the ship for twelve months, and when October arrived and there seemed no likelihood of her return to Bermuda I decided to go south in the hope of rejoining my husband at Jamaica. The same detestable little ship which had brought me from Halifax to Bermuda a year earlier received my shrinking body and comparatively inflexible spirit, and after a weary week of tropical heat spent in company with a cargo of (literally) "stinking fish" destined for the negro gourmets of Jamaica I gladly disembarked from the Royal Mail steamer *Alpha* at Port Royal. There I was the guest of Commodore Dowding at Admiralty House, and by the time I was restored to the full enjoyment of those senses I had often wished suspended on my voyage the *Tourmaline* arrived. For the next five months, with but one hiatus of three weeks when riotous Indians in the hinterland of British Honduras made her presence desirable at Belize, the little ship lay at Port Royal or cruised round the island of Jamaica.

The hospitable Commodore insisted upon my regarding his house as headquarters, but sometimes alone and sometimes with my husband, who knew the island well, I visited various places more interesting and less circumscribed than Port Royal.

Sir Henry Blake was then Governor of Jamaica, and from time to time I passed a few days under the spreading brown roof of King's House. No previous Governor had travelled through the length and

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breadth of the island as had Sir Henry, and Lady Blake, who made light of roughing it, was his constant companion. To Sir Henry's long period of office is due the opening up of the island by many excellent roads, and these important aids to civilisation and commerce form a lasting memorial of his rule, while his fearless combating of the power of *obeah* (witchcraft) and its priests let light into the darkest places and weakened the tyranny of a far-reaching and detestable system. By his orders the implements of the *obi*-men were publicly burnt by the native police—a valuable object-lesson for all who were present.

But the belief in sorcery, based on the undoubted power for evil possessed by those who practise it, is too deeply rooted in the mind of the West Indian negro to be dispelled until centuries of enlightened and humane government have made clear to him the guiding principles of Christianity and fostered in him a love of honour and clean living. An old clergyman in Bermuda, where a higher degree of civilisation, or perhaps I should say a rudimentary scepticism regarding their ancient beliefs, obtains among the coloured population, told me sadly that though he had laboured for forty years to make good Christians of his coloured flock he could not claim to have influenced them to any perceptible degree. "One might as well boil down the Bible and Prayer Book and pour the liquor over them," he said. "Nothing I have taught them seems to have affected their conduct in daily life."

A story told me in Jamaica by a blind philanthropist

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from Baltimore illustrates the apparent inability of the negro to see the necessity for putting into practice the religious principles taught him in church or school. A coloured preacher recounting his "experiences" at a camp meeting was heard to say, "Ah, my brothers! I've broken nearly every one of the ten commandments over and over again, but, thank the Lord, *I've always kept my religion.*"

The negroes of Jamaica love to go frequently to church, where they sing lustily and with tuneful voice hymns innumerable, and on Sunday morning the roads are gay with brightly-dressed ladies of colour, redolent of patchouli, downy with *pearl powder*, and wearing cardboard hats loaded with trimming perched high upon their fuzzy heads. It is not in her festal array that the negress shows to the best advantage. Swinging along a mountain road, barefooted and hatless, with anything from a flat-iron to a kitchen table poised on her head, she can look both dignified and picturesque. The soft voices and funny idiom of the negroes are attractive, their knowledge of herbal medicaments is remarkable and almost uncanny, and they possess a proverbial philosophy in which there is wisdom and originality.* But emancipation has, so far, brought their failings rather than their virtues to the surface. Dog-like faithfulness has given place to an irritating assumption of an equality with the white man which can never be theirs so long as their skulls

* Two of their proverbs I have preserved :—"Many time Debbil help thief ; one time de Lawd help watchman " ; and " Rock-stone in ribber not know what road-stone feel."

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remain simian in character. "If God Almighty had intended the negro and the white man to be equal He would not have given the negro a sloping forehead and a black skin," said an old American gentleman (a Yankee) to me. "There is, in my opinion, as much difference between a white man and a negro as there is between a horse and a mule."

At King's House there was plenty of good talk salted with wit, and the simple yet adequate dignity of the domestic atmosphere was very pleasing. We used to breakfast under the lofty shelter of a wooden pavilion in the garden, where the morning freshness of a languid climate was to be enjoyed. One day the Governor, next whom I was sitting, broke off in the middle of a sentence and adjured me in a low voice to keep perfectly still. I thought of snakes, and preserved the frozen immobility of terror. It was not a snake, of course, that was under the table, since there are now none in the island, but Lady Blake's naughty monkey, which had broken its chain! Very quietly Sir Henry grasped the creature by the neck, and bore him away regardless of Lady Blake's protest that her pet had only shown his affection for her husband by crawling under the table to lie at his feet. Her passion for sharp-beaked birds, undomestic animals and even reptiles was sometimes a cause of tribulation to Lady Blake's entourage, and I confess I was none too easy in my mind when her pretty daughter was leading a young alligator round the garden by a piece of string tied round its waist. But I am sorry I was not present when a group of her pets was photographed

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on the lawn. The alligators and iguanas, macaws, parrots, monkeys, dogs and cats were collected opposite the camera, but the monkeys fainted at the sight of the alligators, and confusion, made vocal by the piercing shrieks of the macaws, reigned. Ice was fetched and placed as a restorative upon the heads of the unconscious monkeys, and the menagerie was regretfully disbanded by its proprietor before a satisfactory picture could be obtained by the embarrassed photographer.

CHAPTER L

PORT HENDERSON

BEFORE Christmas Dick and I broke away from the superior comforts of Admiralty House and established ourselves for a fortnight's *solitude à deux* in a little bungalow near Port Henderson, which lies opposite Port Royal at the mouth of Kingston Harbour. Port Henderson is the deserted village of Jamaica. Commercial competition and yellow fever killed it, and nothing of its former prosperity remains. A very humble general shop, about five negro inhabitants, stretches of crumbling wharf and rows of rotting warehouses were all that was left in 1895. But we were in search of peace ; and we found peace, fresh air and beauty in the isolation we had deliberately chosen.

Facing us were the magnificent ranges of the Blue

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Mountains with one of the finest harbours of the world lying at their feet. To the right we saw Port Royal, with its red-roofed houses and little gingerbread towers, simmering away in the sunshine, and on the left the sweeping curve of sandy beach fringed with vivid green mangroves and broken by groups of tall cocoanut palms standing as straight as the stiff sea breeze would let them, and quartering the middle distance with their waving branches. We saw the sun rise when we had a mind to, and though we had no western horizon visible from our veranda, we never missed the reflected glories of a sunset that bathed the mountains in fire and streaked the harbour with shell pink and pale gold. Our veranda was cool enough after two o'clock to be comfortable, and long before Port Royal had done frying in wavering lines of heat we were enjoying the grateful shade of the hills at our back.

Every morning after our early cup of coffee we went down to the village to bathe in a saline spring which our landlord, Mr. Hotchkin, of Half Way Tree Pen, had roofed in and made *practicable*. Its temperature was only 60°, it was about four feet deep, and if we swam very economically it took just ten strokes to circumnavigate it. A great part of every day was spent in sheer loafing with or without a book, but when the heat diminished we would walk on the hilly bridle-road leading past Apostles Battery to the Lazarette, or paddle along the shore in the skiff, exploring as we went and filling our pockets with shells, pelican's wingbones, or bits of coral picked up among the rocks.

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The humours of our household afforded an agreeable distraction to us, its irresponsible members. Priday the cook, Tinsley the steward, and Reynolds the coxswain composed our "permanent staff"; Reynolds' Irish terrier, Patsy, was an impermanent or intermittent inmate, and Mrs. MacTavish, a singularly dirty old black charwoman, visited us daily. She wore a black cotton bedgown, a necklace of large cornelian beads, and a crumpled red and white handkerchief bound round her head. Now and then she would have a washing day in our garden and hang the black garment out to dry while she wore a purple skirt and a red blouse. Her duties consisted in bringing up ten pails of water daily from the village tank, making two beds and polishing three floors. It was very hard to understand what she said, but as she was dotingly incoherent this mattered very little. She told us on our arrival that she usually received three *maccaronis* and a half for seven half-days' work, and as none of us knew what a *maccaroni* was we offered her five shillings a week and spoilt the market, for a *maccaroni* turned out to be nothing more remarkable than a shilling! On our first morning Mrs MacTavish brought three ragged brown granddaughters to help her to polish the floors, but the steward fell over them so often in the pantry and the sitting-room that we abolished them then and there. The old lady never knew what to do next, nor when to go away, and it was funny to hear the men chaffing her good-naturedly in their cockney English. "Now, then, old Dame Trot, it's about time for you to be toddling. O revore, my dear. No? you don't

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understand French, don't you? Well, it means go; g-o—go. Now, we shan't be long," and so on for five minutes before Mrs. MacTavish could be prevailed upon to move homewards. One day we overheard Priday asking her if she was "of Scotch extraction." "Ay?" she questioned doubtfully. "I mean, do you come from Scotland, near England?" he explained. "Yees, Engleesh," said Mrs. MacTavish, nodding her turbaned head vigorously. "Well, now, I wonder 'ow it was ye come to get so sunburnt," rejoined the light-hearted cook, and the old lady cackled in ignorant sympathy with the men's laughter. I gave her a sailor-hat, a pair of Dick's boots, and a pink chiffon blouse before we left; at least I put the blouse in the rubbish basket hoping she would not think of wearing it, but she did.

The kitchen of our bungalow was a very queer place, and we feared at first that Priday might rebel. It was detached from the house and boasted neither range nor stove. There was nothing but a wide open hearth across which were laid from dog to dog two long and crooked iron bars, and for fuel there were a dozen bundles of small logs piled in one corner of the kitchen. For cooking utensils there were a gridiron and a frying-pan, a couple of saucepans and a three-legged pot with a flat lid. In this pot the chickens were roasted and the tarts baked. The earthen floor was undulating, and the cook had to climb up a slippery rock to reach the hearth, but Priday and his colleagues were imperturbably good-tempered, and somehow we had a very good dinner of five courses every night.

PORT HENDERSON

The men's sleeping place was a wooden hut on legs, and this they accepted gleefully as part of a huge joke which included Mrs. MacTavish and the open hearth. I daresay the joy of getting away for a whole fortnight from the restricted monotony of life on board ship did not seem to them too dearly bought.

The unclaimed pigs of Port Henderson—unclaimed since nobody likes to acknowledge inveterate trespassers—gave the Captain's "retinue" a good deal of trouble. A party of them actually spent the night following our arrival under the men's sleeping hut and nearly capsized the whole erection by their violent behaviour at two a.m. After this a truceless war was waged upon them, and if I had not been assured that these errant pigs were valued at only three shillings a-piece by their anonymous owners I should have been uneasy as to the result, for whenever they showed their long noses within our precincts Friday or Tinsley or Reynolds and Patsy would drive them squealing down the road or into the thorny acacia scrub behind the house. Pigs belonging to coloured people in Jamaica are generally lodged, but never boarded, by their owners and are the leanest and shabbiest of their kind. We used, indeed, to see them paddling along the shore at Port Henderson Beach and grubbing in the sand and weed for crabs or small fish to appease their hunger.

Port Henderson Beach is a little fishing village of small tumble-down shingle houses about half a mile from the port itself. Rows of odd-looking dugouts *

* Fishing-boats, made of the hollowed-out trunks of cedars and brought from Colon.

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are drawn up on the sand, and the names roughly painted on these primitive boats are strangely spelt. The *Rushlite*, *Evadny*, *Princess My*, and *Let Me Aloe* were resting when we saw them, and all round them fishermen sat on the sand busily weaving fish-pots out of split bamboo. The pattern they wove was that of the ordinary cane-bottomed chair, but the mesh was far larger, and when the woven strips were bound together at the edges with lianes a pot two feet across sold for eight *maccaronis*. The men worked hard and did not care to talk, details pointing to the conclusion that the seafaring negro earns his living less easily than does his inland brother. The latter by working three days a week can provide himself with an ample supply of the necessaries of life, for the coloured gentleman of Jamaica demands American wages, and were it not for coolie labour imported from India the sugar planters of the island would now be not merely impoverished but ruined.

We left Port Henderson reluctantly when our holiday came to an end. There had been no discomfort, much less hardship, in our rest-cure, since the kindness of our landlord and his capable wife had supplemented the bare essentials of our simple life in a hundred ways. Not a day passed but something good to eat found its way up to our bungalow from Half Way Tree Pen—a basket of tamarinds or a jar of Devonshire cream, some devilled cashew nuts, or a section of golden honey—while bunches of eucharis lilies and scarlet amaryllis, calladiums, splashed with crimson and gold, great sprays of rosy abelia, and the huge

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white blossoms of the beaumontia made our sitting-room fragrant and beautiful throughout that happy fortnight.

CHAPTER LI

LAST WEEKS IN JAMAICA

ON our return to Port Royal the Commodore received us as prodigal children. "What pleasure you can find in leaving this comfortable house and planting yourselves in the desert I can't conceive," was his comment on our little escapade. And yet no man was better able to rough it than he, as his subsequent experiences in the untrodden places of South America proved. Perhaps the risks he ran in that expedition compensated for the loneliness and discomfort, hunger and fatigue it entailed. He undoubtedly gloried in his freedom from the ties which make a married man think twice before risking his life for the sake of adventure. He was quite certain that no naval officer should marry, and dwelt with contemptuous pity on the restricted opportunities, the financial trials and domestic discomfort endured by the "poor devils" who had "given up their liberty for the sake of a pretty face." If I protested that matrimony was not without its alleviations and had proved a happy estate in the case of many naval officers of small means, he would tell me of tragedies within his own cognisance which had

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proved the contrary. "Haven't I seen the poor chaps at the club?—hundreds of them," he would say. "At half-past six or seven, when we bachelors are looking forward to a good dinner and a pleasant evening, the married man lays down his newspaper with a sigh and turns out into the dark, scrambles into a crowded 'bus, and is jolted off to West Kensington or Campden Hill, or some such God-forsaken suburb. And what does he find there? A slatternly, down-at-heel wife with her hair in curl papers, a smoking fire, a pack of squalling children, and an uneatable meal—high tea, very likely."

I was young enough then to feel hurt by such tirades. Now, when I hear an elderly sailor inveigh against marriage I am tempted to conclude that he fell among sirens as a sub.

Early in January, 1896, the *Tourmaline* went round to the north coast of Jamaica. Filibusters from Cuba had made a naval patrol desirable, and Dick was sworn in as a magistrate for no less than five divisions of the island. As soon as the ship had arrived in the harbour of Ocho Rios I set out to rejoin my husband, going by train to Moneague in the centre of the island and driving thence through a district producing tropical trees, ferns, and flowering creepers which surpassed my wildest hopes. Arrived at Ocho Rios, I installed myself at the primitive wooden lodging-house of Mrs. Mesquitta, a lady of colour, where for a week I slept and breakfasted, my days being passed on board the ship or in exploring the surrounding country with my husband and other *Tourmalines*. But for the far-

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reaching malice of the ticks, which burrowed right under our skins and set up an almost ceaseless irritation that lasted for weeks, we should have been perfectly happy at Ocho Rios, with its little horseshoe harbour, its exquisite woodland walks and shallow rushing rivers, and we were sorry to move on to Montego Bay when the time came. The trip thither took only eight hours of daylight, and when the screw had been disconnected and hoisted and the ship was going smoothly along under a good spread of canvas, I positively enjoyed my first and only *sailing* voyage on board a man-of-war. Near Montego Bay there was a comfortable hôtel in the hills, but my recollections of our stay there are of days and nights made miserable by the mining operations of the ticks we had all brought with us from Ocho Rios; and everyone we met talked of ticks and smelt of the paraffin which they used to repel their advances. Wherever there are cattle there are ticks, and valuable young beasts in Jamaica are actually killed by those which get into their throats and set up an incurable irritation. When there were snakes in Jamaica the ticks gave no trouble, but when the mongoose, introduced to rid the country of snakes, had killed them all he turned his attention to wild birds' eggs, and before long there were no small birds to eat the ticks! Personally I prefer ticks to snakes, but I doubt if I should find a cattle-raiser in Jamaica to agree with me.

The time of my departure for England was fixed for mid-March, and, sorry as I was to part company with my husband and the ship, I had my reunion with Roger,

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now between nine and ten years old, to look forward to. Besides, I was glad to leave a climate as enervating as that of the Jamaican coast. Had I been the wife of a soldier I should have spent a great part of my time in the hills, where one can wear a woollen gown by day and sit by a fire in the evening, but, since no ship other than the Ark of Noah has proved a good mountain climber, the *Tourmaline* and I stayed together on the sea level until I was very nearly "boiled to rags."

Just after I left Jamaica a sham fight which I imagine to be unique in the history of such events took place between the Army guarding Port Royal and the shores of Kingston Harbour and the Navy, represented by H.M.S. *Tourmaline*, her one small steamboat and her pulling boats. All that was expected of my husband was that he should steam up the harbour and, by exchanging a few shots with the forts, demonstrate to the satisfaction of the military authorities the impregnability of their defences. Although the umpires considered the strategy by which the sailors captured Kingston and Port Royal unwarrantable, the joy and gratification afforded by its success to the *Tourmalines*, from their captain down to the youngest midshipman employed, were unbounded.

Far from behaving in the orthodox manner anticipated by his superiors, Dick, under cover of darkness, landed a party consisting of two officers and sixty men under Lieutenant Arthur W. Craig* on the Palissades, a strip of sand fourteen miles long forming a natural breakwater behind which Kingston lies.

* Now Captain.

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They got the whaler across two hundred yards of sand and launched her on the far side, whence she proceeded unobserved to Kingston. There Mr. Craig landed with a couple of hands and deposited without opposition a number of jam tins labelled " High Explosives, H.M.S. *Tourmaline*," in the principal Government buildings. Members of Mr. Craig's party also set fire (theoretically) to all the coal stores, blew up (theoretically) a guardboat and returned unmolested to the ship by the way they came. The *Tourmaline* had in the interval steamed towards Port Royal and successfully distracted the attention of the forts from the proceedings of the enterprising whaler, while at the Dockyard at Port Royal Lieutenant Le Hunte Ward * in another of the ship's boats had made a clean sweep of undefended shipping and coal stores.

Neither the Commodore nor the General was pleased, and when the Kingston daily paper described the finding of the " explosive " jam tins at the central police station, the town hall and other important places in the capital, the General tore his hair.

CHAPTER LII

MIDSHIPMEN

THE *Tourmaline* midshipmen were less wild than the old *Invincibles*, for the *Tourmalines* had plenty of

* Now Commander.

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games in which to let off the steam which inspired the crazy and sometimes dangerous pranks committed by my midshipmen friends at Alexandria ten years earlier. It was the very boys who had shown most coolness and daring in the bombardment and its sequel who came to grief in the quieter times that followed. Young blood must circulate healthily, and stoppages of leave involving loss of exercise often lead to outbreaks far more to be deplored than a mere disinclination for X-chasing * or a tendency to make blots in a log, or even on the fair pages of the leave-book. Beating was an excellent punishment when humanely administered. "Six with the dirk scabbard" was a most wholesome deterrent, and it is to be regretted that cadets and midshipmen are no longer treated like public school boys of equal age. But luckily some wise captains and commanders hold views of their own on this subject.

The *Tourmaline's* midshipmen were cheerful, straightforward and unspoilt. No active pursuits on duty or for pleasure came amiss to them. Mr. G. F. S. Bowles † was more the man of the world than any of them, but his capacity for enjoyment and his generous disposition made him a good comrade, and all who have read his "Gunroom Ditty Box" know that his short career as a naval officer was not unfruitful. Of his messmates the greater number have steadily advanced along the path of honour and promotion, but one, alas!—Mr. Fitzwilliams, tall, brown-faced, and merry-eyed—was accidentally drowned as a lieutenant. Mr. (now

* Mathematics.

† M.P. 1906—10.

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Commander) Quentin Crauford, senior midshipman, was a most original person, and greatly diverted us one evening at dinner by asking if we knew how to do an enemy to death without risking detection. We said we were unprovided with the recipe, and he proceeded solemnly: "You get some cat's hairs, chop them up fine, and mix them with your enemy's food. Gradually they will choke him. It's much safer than poison."

Each year the midshipmen asked permission to draw upon the fund supplied by their parents for some outing or expedition judged suitable by their commanding officer. From Halifax in 1894 they set forth to search for hidden treasure, confident that they possessed the clue to one of Captain Kidd's *caches*! Gleefully they departed on hired bicycles, heavily encumbered with blankets, weapons, tools and food of various descriptions, but when the account of their proceedings was duly written and sent in to the captain there was no mention of the treasure-hunt. They had "tarried" most agreeably "at Capua." A pleasant riverside boarding-house not many miles away had provided them with excellent entertainment and appreciative company, and the knowledge they acquired during their week's outing of the lumber business was carefully set down in their reports. I fancy they had a glorious time jumping from log to log of the great rafts of timber, and I know they returned to Halifax sunburnt and beaming, to confront a captain wise enough to realise that their parents' money had not been thrown away.

Eighteen months later the midshipmen went off to

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climb the Blue Mountains in Jamaica. They reached the summit tired and thirsty as twilight fell. Suddenly they awoke to the fact that their supply of drinkables was exhausted, and there was no stream, well, pump, or waterhole in sight. Panic seized them, and they drew lots to decide upon whom the task of descending to the nearest house should fall. Laden with empty bottles, Mr. Kettlewell retraced the steep path; despondent and parched with thirst, his messmates explored the surroundings of the rest-hut until a rain-gauge—a Government rain-gauge—burst upon their view. Recklessly they drank from it, caring nothing for the consequences to the Meteorological Office of Jamaica, or indeed to the whole world of science; but they did not drink deeply, for the water was nasty, stale stuff, and few had partaken of it before a shout of joy from a successful explorer announced that good water had been found. Close to the hut, before their very eyes, under their very noses, was a large board bearing the inscription in the plainest lettering. "This way to the Well." Poor Mr. Kettlewell was the only sufferer.

When I told this story to Sir Henry Blake he remarked with a twinkle in his eye, "They will have to go back again and fill up that rain-gauge, or the Government Meteorologist will have their blood." Needless to say the Governor did not impose this penance on the erring midshipmen, so the returns for 1896 must have shown an unaccountable deficiency in the rainfall of Jamaica.

Some of the *Tourmaline's* midshipmen grew apace

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and added, if not cubits, inches to their stature in the three years they spent on the North American and West Indian Station. Their trousers ran up their legs, their sleeves retreated almost to their elbows, and the mothers who had stooped to bestow the farewell kiss stood level with, or were overtopped by the strong-armed, long-legged boys who returned to them in 1896. A tale, more tragic than funny, told me in 1897 by a gigantic lieutenant of the *Hawke** illustrates the inconvenience of rapid growth. He went out to the Cape a small cadet, but before two-thirds of the commission were over he had shot up beyond all expectation. He would have had to refuse a tempting invitation to spend a week up-country but for the kindness of a brother officer who lent him a suit of clothes commensurate to his requirements. For two days Mr. Fisher enjoyed life unspeakably. Then a telegram from his benefactor put an abrupt end to his outing: "Return suit immediately, am invited to B——." Disappointed and embittered, Mr. Fisher went back to his ship and handed over the borrowed garments to their owner.

Of the midshipmen of my younger days I can write with knowledge. Another system of entry and education, a more liberal supply of pocket-money and the disappearance of masted ships have made of his successor a somewhat different being in non-essentials, yet I believe him to be fundamentally the same. He has been described by "Bartimæus," messmate of the type he portrays and holder of an inspired pen, and it

* Captain W. W. Fisher.

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appears to me that the boy who at an irresponsible, age discharges the obligations of an officer is, as of yore, a creature full of charm and contradictions.

The average midshipman, as I knew him before the penalty of official greatness overtook me, was a very happy combination of the boy and the officer. The responsible boy is, in other walks of life, rarely an unqualified success—witness the buttons, the errand boy, and the chorister—but the young gentleman who became an officer in Her Majesty's Navy at something under sixteen contrived as a rule to unite the performance of his duties with a wholesome and by no means ungratified taste for larks. The youth, occasionally to be met with, who laboured under the distressing delusion that he had already reached the age when romantic attachments were permissible and flirtation an employment suited to his age and official status was not worthy of consideration, and any girl stupid or mischievous enough to allow a midshipman to make love to her deserved, in my opinion, a good shaking. If, however, he showed himself disposed to fetch and carry for her, to eat all the cake she offered him at tea-time, to be her sworn friend and even accomplice in emergencies, and to receive with becoming gratitude such marks of favour as a quarter of a waltz, part of a batch of home-made toffee, or a little good advice, he was the right sort of boy. And she, on her side, had to be scrupulously careful in the matter of fair play. His confidences were absolutely safe with her, and any engagement she made with the smallest of naval cadets held good, even though ten admirals

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and twenty post-captains might thereby be doomed to disappointment.

The "dear little middy" of days gone by was superseded in the 'eighties by the giant midshipman. There have been few microscopic ones since then, and six feet is now no unusual height for a cadet. In 1886 when the seven midshipmen of H.M.S. *Active* were laid out end to end like dominoes upon her deck they covered forty-two feet of it. The main reason for this development was to be found in the improved quality of the food provided in the gunroom and the greater amount of sleep allowed to midshipmen no longer required to keep night watches when in harbour. Life in the gunroom is not yet a life of luxury, although it is far less uncomfortable than of old, but it is generally a healthy one, and lessons in self-effacement and self-control are learnt there as well as those which enable a boy of fifteen or sixteen to deal successfully with men of twice his age and bulk—drunk or sober. Better is a good hand with men than any number of *Ones* ;* but the possessor of both will go far.

The very best kind of midshipman is almost bound to be a pickle, but a firm hand over him, plenty of occupation and an occasional opportunity for exercising his judgment in an emergency will make of him the very best kind of man. He may break the gunroom furniture, commit acts of pure piracy on the other messes and circumvent his superiors in a hundred ingenious ways, but what matter? The worthy,

* Firsts in Mathematics I. and II., Gunnery, Torpedo and Pilotage.

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obtuse, slow-moving boy who cares nothing for games and has not enough original sin or initiative to get into a scrape—and out of it—will never be a success in the Navy.

Providence is, generally speaking, kind to midshipmen, but they are for ever doing unexpected things and, owing mainly to the reckless manner in which they embark on the most blameless enterprises, unforeseen circumstances conspire to trip them up and run them in. Here is an illustration. A midshipman I knew was credited with the awful crime of giving his captain's fox terrier a pin to eat, whereas the boy's own version of the incident, given with perfect candour and careful detail, pointed to the conclusion that the dog wilfully and without encouragement swallowed the pin. "I took some bits of meat up on deck after dinner for the captain's dogs," he explained, "but just as I was going to give it to them the captain came out of his cabin, so I hid it behind a target. The dogs made such a shindy, jumping up and barking round it, that I took it away and *pinned it inside my cap* (!), where it was quite safe. Well, then, unluckily, the band struck up 'God save the Queen,' so I had to take my cap off. All the dogs came round me and simply tore the thing out of my hand and made off with it. It wasn't my fault that Tim ate the pin."

The midshipmen I knew in 1883—84 were a little more primitive, a good deal less cared for, than the contemporaries of "Bartimæus," but they were possibly more resourceful and necessarily more hardy. It seems

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to me that there was far less chance for a boy of mediocre character in those days than there is now. He sank like a stone or swam like a duck according to the chance influences of his surroundings. Lifebelts are provided now, and with their aid a great many weaklings learn to swim ; not very well, perhaps, but passably. Temptation is always available, but the sort of temptation which wrecked the boys of the 'eighties and 'nineties is not so common now, or perhaps it is less attractive to the newer school who may find other paths leading to destruction. Wardroom officers as a class undoubtedly show a greater interest in the youngsters nowadays, but at any period boys have been extricated by the good offices of a friendly lieutenant from some entanglement or saved from some vice who might have gone under had they been left to the tender mercies of a dissipated or merely inefficient sub. or a naval instructor more or less capable of teaching mathematics but incompetent or unwilling to watch over the moral development of midshipmen and cadets. I have known a gunroom which was for a whole commission nothing less than an inferno because there was no powerful humanising influence at work within or above it, and I knew another redeemed from demoralisation by the unobtrusive efforts of a heaven-sent gunnery-lieutenant. A captain, if he is worth his salt, knows all about the conditions of gunroom politics and conduct, but he is too far away and, to the juniors' minds, either too lofty or too antiquated a being to serve as a very present help in trouble. A smart commander sometimes frightens midshipmen ;

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a slack one always confuses them. It is, therefore, in the power of a lieutenant, failing the ideal sub., to become their Father O'Flynn, "checking the crazy ones, coaxing onaisy ones, lifting the lazy ones on wid the shtick."

Games are invaluable in interpreting between juniors and seniors. On the cricket or football ground a boy is rated by his performance or promise in the game, and many a friendship has been made, many a lifelong devotion born during the heated moments of Rugby or the prolonged uncertainty of an inter-ship cricket match. And I have known of ships where music brought wardroom and gunroom together, where concerts and dramatic performances owed perhaps the greater part of their success to the talent shown by gunroom officers. In no situation does character exhibit itself more frankly than in the playing of a game or the playing of a part. More than a match is lost by instability or vanity; more than a reputation as a comic actor is gained by the boy who shows himself unselfish on the amateur stage.

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Thus far had I written when "Songs of the Sailormen," by *T. B. D.*, fell into my hands. The verses "To a Naval Cadet" should be the *vade mecum* of every youngster about to plunge into gunroom life.

T. B. D. has put into that poem, as only a naval officer who is also a gentleman and a poet could have

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done, much that I should have liked to say in this chapter. One verse I must quote :—

*“ Don't harbour a hate for an officer when he calls
You unkind names ;
Wait, and you'll find he cheerfully takes the falls
With you at games.”*

CHAPTER LIII

HOME AND AWAY AGAIN

A LETTER from my sister-in-law announcing the serious illness of Lady Poore was awaiting me at Plymouth, where I disembarked on April 1st, on my return from Jamaica, and as the boat-train carried me swiftly through a dreary grey country, as yet untouched by spring, anxiety instead of happy anticipation filled my mind. In the sad days that followed, anxiety gave place to apprehension, and apprehension to abandonment of hope. Then the strong heart which had never failed children or friends and risen buoyantly above every disappointment and disaster of a chequered life gave up the struggle, fluttered and lay still. If only the son who from his earliest childhood had been the true knight and champion of this incomparable woman could have been there to close the eyes weary with looking for his return we should have been content to let her go. But this last solace was denied her.

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Roger's Easter holidays brought him to me a few days before his grandmother's death. Blind with neuralgia and tired to my very soul, I had to lie still in a darkened room and wait while a friend fetched him from the station, but the warming clasp of his hard little hand and the soft pressure of his round cheek on mine told me I had got him back unchanged at heart after our long separation.

My husband's return in the following month took us down to Sheerness, where the *Tourmaline* was paying off, and Roger's cup of happiness was full.

One cannot but be sorry to say good-bye to the ship-mates of three years, but during the process of paying off there is little time to indulge in regrets, and until the ship lies stripped and silent one does not realise that there is no possibility of reassembling the elements that made of her a home, more or less happy, for that period.

The little *Tourmaline* was turned into a coal-hulk, and since I bade her good-bye on that bright May morning in 1896 I have often passed her lying at anchor midway between Chatham and Sheerness. When my husband was commissioning the battleship *Illustrious* in 1898 the *Tourmaline* came alongside to coal her. The graceful white lady with gold coronet and necklace which formed the ship's figure-head was scarcely to be recognised through the coal-dust and weather-stain of two years. "Don't you remember me?" she seemed to ask, her grimy hand outstretched as though to clasp that of her old captain. It was pitiful. Though she was never a "flyer," the *Tour-*

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maline was once a clean and pretty little craft, and I have just the same feeling of compassion mingled with indignation when I look at her, shabby and degraded, as that which burns within me at the sight of a well-bred, ill-groomed old horse between the shafts of a four-wheeler. Her figure-head has been detached and is now honourably preserved in Chatham Dockyard, while she herself lies at a northern port, humbly useful to the fighting monsters of to-day.

When Roger's summer holidays, which he spent with us in Cornwall, were over we addressed ourselves to the task of finding a flat in London, but hardly were we settled in De Vere Gardens before Dick was appointed to the cruiser *Hawke*, already three months in commission in the Mediterranean, where his old and well-loved chief, Sir John Hopkins, was in command. My husband was happy and proud to rejoin Sir John's flag, but I, though naturally pleased with the appointment, suffered the customary collapse so familiar to sailor's wives who have not had time to tire of dependence and repose. Still I had now an excellent opportunity for visiting my father at Limerick and filling up the gap of three years which even the most conscientious correspondence had not been able to bridge, and there were also Roger's Christmas holidays to be enjoyed before I could shape my course for Malta.

By the end of January, 1897, I had let the flat and completed all the preparations for my journey, which, mindful of my experiences in the Atlantic, would include no more than ten hours of sea all told.

Crossing the Straits of Messina in the ferry I fell

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in with two naval officers bound for Malta from Corfu, where they had been left behind in hospital with fever. Their somewhat halting Italian had failed to secure the second cups of coffee they badly needed, so I came to the rescue and presently discovered that the senior of the two was none other than Hugh Le Fanu, son of my old friend Mr. William Le Fanu! In the hollow-cheeked convalescent there was little likeness to the jolly little boy I remembered meeting ten or eleven years before in Kerry, but the voice and manner were unmistakable, and I found the encounter very refreshing after my long and solitary journey. At the hotel at Syracuse I cut my cake of soap in half with a bit of string so that my fellow-travellers might be at least as clean as I, but this slight benefaction was more than repaid by the moral support they were to afford me a few hours later. There was an outbreak of bubonic plague in Egypt just at this time, and because Mr. Le Fanu and the midshipman accompanying him had come *viâ* Brindisi from Corfu the Sicilian health authorities considered them suspect. We could not follow their reasoning, and when I found that I, too, was regarded with disfavour the position of our little party became serious. However, Mr. Le Fanu insisted on going alongside the Malta steamer *Carola*, and after we had signed various papers and solemnly sworn that we were entirely uncontaminated the captain permitted us to proceed.

As though bent on concentrating all the horrors I had sought to avoid by taking an overland route, the *Carola* for eight hideous hours bounced over the rough

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sea with the airy *insouciance* of a toy balloon, and I, less happily constituted, arrived at my journey's end like one that has encountered the point of a pin.

CHAPTER LIV

FIRST WINTER AT MALTA

My husband had taken rooms at Sliema in the Imperial Hôtel, a broken-down *palazzo* run on a system familiar to people frequenting Malta, but not possessing for English minds or bodies any special advantages. We had however, large and airy rooms which opened on to a wide terrace-balcony overlooking a neglected garden of fair size, and were waited upon by two dear old women, Caroline and Giuseppa, who made up as best they could in zeal and kindness for the startling deficiencies of their principals. The air which came across the open sea was fresher than that in Valletta, and though the distance from the town itself entailed the use of ferry or *carrozze* (a one-horse four-seated carriage with an awning and curtains) whenever we wished to go there, the expense of either was so small as to present no overwhelming obstacle.

The *Hawke* had been only three months in commission when my husband assumed command of her (his predecessor, Captain W. des V. Hamilton, had gone as flag-captain to Sir John Hopkins), but as her com-

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mander, J. de C. Hamilton, had already been in her for ten months she showed little of the rawness and discomfort of the newly-commissioned ship. After the cramped quarters of the *Tourmaline* my husband's cabins appeared to me magnificent, and when I had been to church on board and made the acquaintance of some of the officers and of the two ladies—lieutenants' wives—already settled in Malta I could have few misgivings as to the future. The ship had been known in the previous commission as the smartest cruiser in the Mediterranean, and although the burnishing of the cat-davits and torpedo-booms was now pretermitted as being, in my husband's opinion, a work of supererogation, there seemed good reason to suppose she would maintain her character. I do not see how she could have done otherwise with officers such as hers, and if any critical reader should think of the *Hawke* at that period as anything less than a phoenix among ships a glance at the names of her officers in the Navy Lists of 1896 (and after) will convince him that their standard of efficiency was such as led to early promotion and continuous and important employment.

To my eyes, accustomed to the broad shoulders, deep chests, and sinewy arms of the *Tourmaline's* crew, the men of the *Hawke* looked slight and undeveloped. Between the abolition of masts and yards and the inauguration of adequate physical drill under the "indiarubber man" (officer for gymnastic instruction) there was something of a hiatus, and among the younger seamen one saw but few of the stalwart and

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well trained figures now happily so common. The stokers of to-day might belong to a different race, for in the 'nineties a pasty face and round shoulders almost invariably proclaimed the denizen of the engine-room.

The *Hawke* officers had already instituted a very pleasant custom, that of ship picnics on Saturday afternoons, and though my proficiency as a bicyclist was by no means assured I very soon found myself pedalling away by my husband's side to the rendezvous at the end of Quarantine Harbour. Inwardly terrified I joined the throng, but by dint of the strictest attention to my own business I avoided disaster on the outward ride. Coming back I was less fortunate, for after rounding a corner in company with Mr. Stanley Willis, a sub-lieutenant as tall and handsome as he was kind, I turned left instead of right at a cross-road and knocked him clean off his bicycle! And I had been going along so bravely and even daring to think I had made the first step towards establishing something like friendship with the *Hawkes*. I have always forgotten to ask Mr. Willis what his real feelings were when he picked himself up and assured me in cheerful tones that he was none the worse, but as he made a point of my presenting his young and attractive bride at a Court in 1914 I may safely assume that they were not injured for life. At the time I was crestfallen to the verge of tears, and I told my husband when we got back to Sliema that I was quite certain the *Hawkes* would never like me. He wisely recommended me to be less precipitate in my conclusions, and on the follow-

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ing Saturday I rode with such scrupulous care that at any rate nobody can have considered me a nuisance.

There were sometimes as many as twenty-five of us on these Saturday excursions, and as we were preceded by a *carrozze* laden with material for an ample tea the junior officers turned up in force ; but Mrs. Blomfield, Mrs. Ellis, and I were not the only ladies, for we always contrived to bring with us others whom we knew to possess special attractions for the *Hawkes*.

Almost every Sunday at tea-time my sitting-room and terrace at Sliema were delightfully thronged with midshipmen, and nothing in my life at Malta gave me greater pleasure than their company. Now and again a big fish would drop in, and the minnows would slip hastily out of the net or lie low in a corner till the monster had departed. Once it was the Admiral Superintendent with his wife who arrived unheralded. A scene of consternation ensued, and next Sunday not one midshipman put in an appearance. This object-lesson was not laid to heart by me as it should have been, for I used to wonder at first why no gunroom officers ever crossed the threshold of Admiralty House, Chatham. Then I awoke regretfully to the knowledge that midshipmen feared and distrusted admirals' wives, and I had no claim to be considered an exception by the rising generation, who could not be expected to know how warm a welcome I had always given to their kind.

It is not nice to find oneself the top-stone of an official pyramid. One enjoys in one's youth the equality and comradeship afforded by its wide-spreading base,

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but with each successive promotion the goodly fellowship dwindles till at last one stands alone in the lime-light and the storm.

“ Marriage and death and *promotion* make barren our lives.”

Malta was gay that winter, and I danced to my heart's content. Fortunately for me, my husband enjoyed dancing too, but we were of one mind in a desire to leave off at a reasonable hour. The extreme cliquishness that had, I was told, characterised Malta society prior to 1897 was disappearing. The possessors of smart tandems were no longer the only people in a position to explore the island, for bicycling was at its zenith, and bridge had not as yet excluded from many dinner-tables persons happy or unhappy enough to be non-players. For our own part we had nowhere enjoyed the distinction of belonging to any particular *coterie*, and happy as we found ourselves with the *Hawkes* alone, neither they nor we were disposed to raise a barrier round us and take our pleasures only within the limited area it embraced.

Sir Lyon Fremantle was Governor of Malta at this time, and he and Lady Fremantle specially endeared themselves to the naval colony by the kindness they showed to ladies whose husbands were at sea. Captain Biancardi, on the Governor's staff, used, indeed, to keep a list of naval grass-widows, and these were not only invited to dinner, but many among them, unable for one reason or another to return to England for the summer, were asked to spend a week or more at the

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Governor's country house at Verdala, where purer air and greater comfort than any to be had in Valletta refreshed and restored bodies and spirits fatigued and depressed by the stuffy heat of some poky flat or second-rate hotel. The gratitude of sailors' wives found expression in 1898 when a many-branched lamp of antique silver was offered by a number of those they had befriended to the Governor and Lady Fremantle on their departure from the island.

The Governor had not a good memory for faces, nor was he always as felicitous in speech as he was hospitable in intention. At a public reception held at the Palace not very long after Sir Lyon's arrival the Archbishop of Malta, Monsignor Pace, was closely followed in the procession of arriving guests by a Maltese lady of middle age and comfortable proportions and her two daughters. After welcoming the Archbishop with due *empressement* Sir Lyon was unhappily inspired. "And this, of course, is Mrs. Pace!" he exclaimed, shaking the stout lady's hand with great cordiality, "and your Grace's daughters. Such a pleasure!" In what words the outraged Archbishop repudiated the scandalised ladies or whether he left the latter to enlighten the erring Governor I never heard.

VILLEFRANCHE

CHAPTER LV

VILLEFRANCHE

FOR the month of April, 1897, the *Hawke* was told off to act as guardship in Villefranche Harbour to Queen Victoria at Cimiez. True to my principle of avoiding sea voyages whenever possible, I betook myself to the French Riviera *viâ* Italy, and rejoined Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Blomfield, who had gone by Messageries steamer to Marseilles, at Beaulieu. There we were reinforced by Mr. and Mrs. Philip Sclater and their daughter—parents and sister of the *Hawke's* torpedo-lieutenant*—and Miss Patrick, bringing with her not only her small nephew, Pat Ellis, to pay a visit to his parents but Miss Desborough, the *fiancée* of the first lieutenant, Mr. Morgan Singer.† Of course we all had bicycles and on them made expeditions into the rugged and beautiful country at our backs. Monte Carlo engaged the attention of some of us, but failed to hold that of my husband and myself, since we found it poor fun to watch one five-franc piece after another being swept unfailingly from our sight. Now and again we went to Nice and thanked our stars that Beaulieu, rather than that garish city, was our headquarters, and once the captain and officers gave a party on board to all the people of various nationalities who had shown them hospitality.

* Afterwards Captain G. L. Sclater, lost in H.M.S. *Bulwark*, 1914.

† Now Rear-Admiral Singer.

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The Mayor of Villefranche had a wonderful garden at Cap Ferrat, and on the morning of the party masses of coppery pink roses, perfect in form and long in stem, arrived for the beautifying of the cabins. What to put them in I could not imagine, since the supply of vases was hopelessly inadequate. "I have it," cried Dick; "grog measures!" and straightway the ship's steward produced an array of glowing copper mugs and jugs, both great and small, such as I had never seen or dreamt of. Nothing could have been more becoming to the Mayor's roses with their well-shaped copper-lined leaves and pointed buds, bronze green stalks, and delicately-tinted shoots. I have forgotten all about the party, but I shall always cherish the memory of Monsieur Poulain's roses. He called them *Papa Jacquet*, but neither *Papa Gontier* nor *Père Jacquet* can be compared with them, and in no French rose-grower's catalogue have I ever found mention of *Papa Jacquet*. Maybe he was a hybrid of the Mayor's invention.

It is emphatically the right thing to keep up appearances in a foreign port, and anyone could see that this principle was acted upon on board the *Hawke* when she lay at Villefranche. The men habitually wore their best or second-best rig and the guns their Sabbath Day trappings of red cloth pinked out at the edges, white sennit beackets and burnished brass *et ceteras*. The mere fact that the white ensign floated from every boat gave a gala air to her *embarcations*, as her French visitors called them, and only on two days a week was any really hard work done on board. The men's

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conduct was exemplary, and every one of them looked bigger than he had done at Malta, because the men of the Midi are as a rule short. The ship attracted a good many visitors, and her quarter-deck was now and then the theatre of comic incidents and of interviews carried on in extremely broken English.

One hot afternoon three very fine French ladies tripped up the ladder and confronted the officer of the watch. Not one word of English could they speak, and it was some time before Mr. Ellis could fathom their reason for coming on board. "Nous ne désirons pas voir le croiseur ; nous désirons voir des Maltais" was what they kept repeating, and at last he realised that they had come on board merely to see some natives of Malta. What they expected a Maltese to look like he never knew, but he sent them round the ship with a Maltese steward who pointed out to them as many of his fellow-islanders as happened to be on board. These ladies were succeeded by a very strange-looking couple—a gaunt German lady with dishevelled grey hair and a perfect command of our language and a speechless gentleman with rolling black eyes. "I wish to see this ship," said the lady firmly. "I desire to see *everything*." "Certainly," said Mr. Ellis, and calling a boy told him to go round with the Germans and show them everything except the conning-tower and the submerged torpedo-tubes. "But it is exactly those things which I particularly wish to see," objected the lady ; "in fact I *insist* upon seeing them. I have been on board ships of every nation and always I have been treated with the greatest respect and attention.

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Never have I received such treatment as this. I *will* not be refused." "Very sorry, I'm sure," said Mr. Ellis, "but I have my captain's orders." "Captain!" snorted the lady, "I am the friend of admirals." "I have no doubt of it," returned Mr. Ellis, "but I am not going to set aside my commanding officer's orders." Furious, actually snarling, the lady went round the ship, and her dumb escort, rolling his eyes horribly, trotted after her. She returned still raging and protesting, demanded a boat, and flung a "Good afternoon, and thank you for your scant courtesy," over her shoulder as she left the ship. She was too undiplomatic for a spy, but what she had come for no one could make out.

Another day three plump German ladies clad in mud-coloured stuff gowns laboriously climbed the ladder, bowed to the officer of the watch and walked aft as of set purpose. They seated themselves on the gratings round the capstan and for half an hour remained there, whispering among themselves, eating *marrons glacés* out of their leather reticules and throwing the sticky frilled papers about the deck. Then one of them addressed the puzzled officer of the watch: "Kindly tell when the steamer may start."

She and her friends had actually mistaken the beautiful *Hawke* of 7,500 tons and 12,000 horse-power for the little steamer plying daily between Villefranche and Mentone!

But the oddest visitors of all were two French schoolboys who came to see not the ship but the captain—two black-bloused urchins with dark eyes and

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hair cut *en brosse*. They brought with them a petition neatly written in round hand on a ruled sheet torn from a copy-book, but they also desired to speak with the captain of the *Hawke*. This was their petition :

“ VILLEFRANCHE, le 21 avril, 1897.

“ MR. LE COMMANDANT,

“ Nous voudrions savoir si Mr. le Commandant du croiseur Anglais ne pourrait pas nous faire embarquer à son bord comme aspirant.

“ Monsieur, si vous nous acceptiez vous nous rendriez un fier service digne de vous servir très fidèlement, en même temps nous vous serons très reconnaissant. En cas que vous ne pourriez pas nous faire accepter est-ce que si nous demandions à S. M. la reine d'Angleterre est-ce qu'elle nous ferait embarquer soit à son bord, soit alors sur son Yacht, ou bien encore est-ce que nous pourrions être ses serviteurs, la servir bien fidèlement et faire partie ainsi de la Maison Royale, et lui être tout dévoué à sa personne.

“ Oh ! Monsieur, faites tout votre possible pour nous accepter et nous vous serons très reconnaissant. En attendant veuillez agréer, Monsieur, mes sentiments respectueux et reconnaissants.

“ Vos serviteurs dévoués

“ MARTINI MARC et CAMBON JEAN

“ âgés chacun de 15 et 16 ans.

“ Vive l'Angleterre

“ Vive la Reine

“ Vive Mr. le Commandant du Croiseur Anglais.”

My husband interviewed the boys who were very downcast on hearing that there was no possibility of their becoming midshipmen of the *Hawke* nor yet of being attached in any capacity to the Court of Queen

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Victoria, but he settled them down in the fore-cabin and told his steward to give them the best meal he could produce at short notice. They were such little fellows and so terribly in earnest ; and, judging by the peculiar wording of their petition, it seemed as though they had but one heart and soul between them. Their letter was shown to the Queen a few days later. She was touched by their wish to serve her and amused to find that *only if they failed to join the Hawke* did they desire to be attached to her person.

CHAPTER LVI

AN OLD DREAM COMES TRUE

My husband had dined with the Queen shortly after his arrival, and I, personally, expected to have nothing more than a fleeting glimpse of Her Majesty as her carriage passed us on the road, but by a mere chance and through a most unlikely channel, my presence at Beaulieu was revealed to her with a result very surprising to myself.

A party of *Hawke* officers in company with their feminine belongings had set forth one afternoon in a ship's cutter to picnic on the shore below Cap Ferrat, but on their arrival it was discovered that the first lieutenant had forgotten to have a breaker of water for tea-making placed in the boat. So it came about that Mr. Singer, and Mr. W. W. Fisher, followed by a

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bluejacket bearing a bucket, scaled the rocks and begged from the nearest house on the high-road the water we required. Returning they found the Queen's carriage drawn up by the roadside, where servants were making preparations for tea. The officers raised their hats and passed on, but the bluejacket was stopped by the Queen herself. "What are you carrying in that bucket?" asked Her Majesty. "Water, Madam," replied the man, removing his hat and setting down the bucket, "Water for the first lieutenant of the *Hawke*. The officers and some of their lady friends are having a picnic on the shore and the water was forgotten." "Oh," said the Queen. "Is Sir Richard Poore there?" "No, Madam;—but Lady Poore is," answered the communicative sailor. And that was all.

Of course the party on the rocks heard all there was to tell of this exciting incident, and the bluejacket gladly repeated for our edification the conversation he had just had with the Queen.

Next day on our return to Beaulieu from an expedition to Ezes an important-looking envelope was awaiting my husband. It contained a command for both of us to dine the same evening with the Queen. Terror, rather than gratitude or elation, possessed me, for I was so overpowered by a conviction of my own inadequacy that I would have welcomed a sprained ankle or a swelled face should either be considered a sufficient reason for failing to appear four hours later at Cimiez. My husband did what he could to reassure me, and I proceeded to review my very limited stock of evening gowns, helped by a self-appointed committee of deeply-

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interested ladies. A silver-grey garment was chosen, and my hair was done by hands more skilful than my own. Miss Patrick provided an exquisite evening wrap, the equal of which I have never possessed, a fan of corresponding elegance, and a petticoat so much smarter than my gown that it seemed a sin to conceal its beauties, while diamond crescents and stars were positively showered upon me by those among my friends fortunate enough to possess such things. That I did not wear them all was no fault of their owners.

We drove off in such good time that we reached Cimiez long before the hour and were shown into a drawing-room of which we were the only occupants until Lord and Lady Glenesk appeared. The latter at once pulled off her gloves and rolling them into a ball stuffed them into a corner of a sofa. I was surprised but, with a deplorable lack of perception, failed to see in the action a well-meant hint to do likewise. When we had sat for a few minutes in silence I meekly observed that we had arrived ever so much too early. "Oh," replied Lady Glenesk, "we *never* come till just before nine"; whereupon the humbled novice subsided until the suite assembled and Dick introduced me to Lady Lytton, then in waiting.

At last the wide doors flew open and a dignified personage whom I called in my mind "The Lord High Butler," though he might have been a herald or a toast-master by his voice, cried "THE QUEEN!" and as my Sovereign passed into the room my quivering knees bent and straightened with the vertical action and reaction of a concertina, and I found I had curt-

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seyed. Then Lady Lytton drew me towards the dining-room door near which the Queen had paused to shake hands with her guests. The cordial tones of her perfect voice, the satin-soft touch of the warm little hand that met mine (encased in the glove I had been too stupid to remove) were unforgettable. The blood rushed back to my heart, and when my turn came I entered the dining-room not much more frightened than I had been at my own wedding.

There were but ten, all told, at table. On either side of the Queen sat a Princess : Princess Henry of Battenberg on her right, Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein on her left. On Princess Henry's right Lord Glenesk with Lady Lytton on his other side, while my husband sat between Princess Victoria and Lady Glenesk. I, at the foot of the table, faced the Queen and had Captain F. Ponsonby on one side of me and Colonel Carrington on the other. The former proved communicative, the latter quite the reverse ; and I must admit that I felt rather as though I were talking in church and suppressed with difficulty an inclination to whisper. But the dinner itself was perfect in every respect, for it was as short as it was excellent, and though I am no judge of wine I am convinced that Jove's own special brand of nectar could not compare with the Queen's champagne.

Less than an hour had been spent at table when the Queen rose and, leaning heavily on her stick, returned to the drawing-room. In a straight-backed Empire chair, all white and gold, she sat for about an hour, talking first to the Princesses who had some snapshots

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to show her and afterwards to each of her four guests in turn. While Lady Glenesk had her innings Princess Victoria talked to me, and I have always thought the Queen's champagne responsible for the courage and coherence I showed in conversation with the Princess when I knew it would soon be my turn to stand before the white and gold armchair.

Princess Henry had sent down to the *Hawke* a week or so earlier to ask that "the tailor" should go up to Cimiez and measure Prince Maurice, aged five and a half, for his first sailor suit. There was no tailor officially designated as such on board, but the first lieutenant despatched a bluejacket of exceptional skill to take the Princess's orders, and Princess Victoria was amused to learn that the man had consulted Mr. Singer on his return to the ship as to what material should be used to line the waist of the little Prince's trousers. He "had thought of *red plush* as suitable for a Royal young gentleman," and was with difficulty dissuaded from employing this magnificent material. Princess Victoria told me that the first time Prince Maurice wore his suit the sentry at the garden gate saluted him—an honour never accorded to the Prince when he wore petticoats, and one which so confused the little boy that he clutched his trousers with both hands as though they had been skirts and rushed past the sentry without acknowledging the salute ! *

* Seventeen years later Princess Victoria came with Princess Christian to lunch with us at Admiralty House, Chatham. I asked her if she remembered Prince Maurice's first trousers. "Oh, yes," she said, laughing, "and the kind sailor who wanted to line them with red plush !"

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The Princess told me another amusing story.

The *Cambrian*, commanded by Prince Louis of Battenberg, which had preceded the *Hawke* as guard-ship at Villefranche, had had a very rough passage from Malta with Princess Louis and her children on board, and one night when the ship was rolling badly some of the photographs in the first lieutenant's cabin, made over to little Princess Alice,* had jumped from their places against the bulkhead and landed on the bunk where she was sleeping. Next morning she was heard to complain indignantly to the first lieutenant (Mr. Mark Kerr, who possessed an unusually complete gallery of Royal portraits) that *all her relations had fallen on her face in the middle of the night!* With such stories did the kind Princess beguile me until, with the termination of Lady Glenesk's audience, I was bidden to advance, and standing in front of the Queen I answered her questions to the best of my ability, amplifying my replies in the hope that I should save her the trouble of seeking fresh topics. She asked if I had any children. I told her one, a boy of nearly eleven who, we hoped, would some day be a sailor. "Where is he now?" asked the Queen. I glanced at the clock. "On his way from London to Limerick, ma'am." "All alone?" she asked. "Yes, ma'am, but the guard of the Irish mail will wake him at Holyhead." "Oh, the poor little fellow!" she cried. "Couldn't you have sent somebody with him?" I was embarrassed, for I hardly liked to explain that children of our class and fortune must learn to find

* Now Princess Andrew of Greece.

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their own way about unless chance provides an escort, and said he had so often made the journey that he was not afraid to travel alone. Then she asked me what I thought of the recent raising of the age at which cadets joined the *Britannia*. To tell the truth I have forgotten what view I then took of the matter, but it agreed with that of the Queen. Her next question staggered me : " And has Sir Richard no other children ? " " No, your Majesty," I faltered ; " I am the only wife he ever had." She smiled and said " I beg your pardon." Then, with a little frown, " I have been misinformed."

What else passed I cannot recollect, but twice I made the Queen laugh, and though it may have been my ingenuousness or ignorance of etiquette that amused her I have put the fact down in the short list of good deeds that stand to my credit. After about ten minutes' conversation she inclined her head in dismissal. I curtseyed and withdrew to the background. I had broken a stick of Miss Patrick's beautiful fan and shed three large violets on the floor at the Queen's feet, but I was helped to retreat in good order by Lady Lytton, who gathered me up, as it were, and set me at my ease. I would have laid more, far more, than three violets at the Queen's feet. The command to dine at Cimiez, inspired, I am sure, by that chance encounter with a sailor from the *Hawke*, had brought about the realisation of a dream repeated again and again from my childhood up. I had seen and spoken with Queen Victoria.

Before the ship left Villefranche my husband

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dined again at Cimiez, and Lady Lytton told him that the Queen had been quite distressed to think she had regarded me as his second wife (it was commonly believed that Queen Victoria did not like second marriages). How and why she should have been misinformed as regards my insignificant self I shall never know. But misinforming a queen should rank as *lèse majesté*, for, as my father said to us long years before in Dublin, it is the business of everyone in attendance on Royal personages to be well informed.

Our happy month at Beaulieu came to an end in the first days of May. When Dick had seen me off at Nice he took the train to Monte Carlo, put a five-franc piece on Zero, and won back just as much as we had lost on a previous visit to the tables !

CHAPTER LVII

CRETAN COMPLICATIONS

THE *Hawke* was sent almost direct from the Riviera to Candia, an abrupt descent from elaborate and peaceful civilisation to militant semi-barbarism, for disturbances in Crete at this period were occupying the anxious attention of the Great Powers, and a naval demonstration in force was made in Suda Bay, where English, French, Russian, Italian, and Austrian admirals had combined in an endeavour to point out

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to Greeks, Turks, and Cretans the error of their ways. Several regiments had been sent from Greece ostensibly to protect their co-religionists, but their presence embarrassed rather than helped those whom they had come to serve. Crete was a hotbed of revolutionaries and brigands, a land of oppressors and oppressed, as awkward, indeed impossible, to handle as a disturbed wasps' nest, and it was only the supreme importance of Suda Bay as the best harbour in the Levant with a productive country behind it which compelled the Powers to join in an effort to keep the island open to their fleets.

The admirals made Suda Bay their headquarters, but on May 10th my husband found himself Senior Naval Officer at Canea in command of ships of six nationalities and all descriptions.

" I am supported " (he wrote on that date) " by the fact that my coadjutor-captains consider me very young for the position. My indiscretions will be the more pardonable. The situation here is a curious one. Candia is a very old walled city inside which our troops—Welsh Fusiliers, Seaforths and a Mountain Battery—are quartered. The population is almost pure Mussulman and consists of people who have been driven from their homes by the Christians (save the mark !) and are now living on a Government dole of eleven ounces of flour per head per day. There are twenty-nine thousand of them. Outside the town is a belt of land four miles deep on which, by agreement between the admirals and the Cretan Christians, the Candians are allowed to graze their sheep ; beyond the four-mile limit there is a neutral zone one thousand yards deep, and then comes the Cretan insurgents' line. Turkish troops hold Candia and are having pretty constant trouble with the

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outsiders. Heavy firing was going on yesterday. Naval officers may land, but may not go outside the town; in fact *we* are in a state of blockade, and if the Turkish troops were withdrawn the Cretan Christians would cut the throat of every Mussulman left in the place, *though these are Cretans* born and bred, and settled from time immemorial in the island. The whole thing seems to me an *impasse*. I should rather like to raise a corps by forced levies from the shrieking section of the British public who have got up an hysterical agitation over the 'poor Christians' and send *them* to garrison Crete, preserve order and bring peace and prosperity to their dear downtrodden brethren. There's not a pin to choose between Christian and Mussulman in this island. Mrs. Ormiston Chant" (a lady best known for her benevolent efforts as a social reformer in London in the 'nineties) "came out from England the other day to condole with the Cretan insurgents and nurse their sick and wounded. She managed to get passed out to Colonel Vassos' headquarters in the mountains, but returned next day much disappointed by her reception. Colonel Vassos appears to have enquired what the mischief she was doing there, made a prisoner of her and sent her back straight-way."

My husband's job was, roughly speaking, to see the Greek troops out of Crete. Two thousand soldiers with their guns and all munitions of war, etc., had to be firmly yet painlessly removed and repatriated without damaging the susceptibilities of a highly-susceptible race.

"It is most interesting and most difficult" (he wrote) "and I hope I shall come out of it without burning my fingers badly. The way I disobey orders makes me shake in my shoes and doubt my own consistency, for you know my views about implicit obedience to orders!

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My very slight knowledge of languages is invaluable, and you would laugh to hear me laying down the law in French to half a dozen people of different nationalities who hang upon my words. I have seen many old friends here—Carlo Mirabello, Serra, Agnelli and Orsini,” (all friends of ours at Spezia in 1891-2) “and Captain Antoine, who was with Admiral de Maigret in the *Naiade* at Quebec, is my right hand man and such a good straight fellow.”

The Greek soldiers “backed and filled” in the most maddening way. Three times they came down to the shore at Platania before they eventually embarked with all their warlike stores on May 26th. On May 24th my husband wrote :—

“There is something peculiarly distasteful to me in having to make things unpleasant for the Greeks. It is very much like hitting a man when he is down, for the star of Greece is not in the ascendant just now. It is true that they have made things unpleasant for Europe at large, but these soldiers have only obeyed orders, and I feel like the big boy who takes it out of a small one, though I am only obeying orders myself. . . . I have made two fast friends here: Ricotti, Captain of the *Rè Umberto*, and Antoine, of the *Chanzy*. The latter is a grandfather, and when he calls me ‘Senior Officer’ it makes me feel shy. It was funny to be in a position to mention him in despatches as I did the other day.”

“May 28th.—CANEAE.—At last I have got all my Greeks safely off the premises, but I had to do all I knew to make the Greek C. O. get some of his field-guns away from the insurgents and refused to embark him and his soldiers unless they brought in the guns. I lent him a destroyer to hunt them up in, and next day she turned up with the guns and a quantity of ammunition. I was delighted because

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I had had a message from the combined admirals the day before to say I should have to let the Greeks go without their guns, and two days later they brought in yet two more of which I had known nothing. The whole business has been very complicated, and it would have been quite impossible to do it off my own bat without a smattering of French and Italian. As it was I did the whole of my interviewing and arranging in French, and I always found someone on board the merchant ships who could speak Italian. At the end of it all the old Greek C. O. came on board to thank me for the excellence of the embarkation arrangements and for my 'invariable courtesy' for the last fortnight. I took him down below and gave him some champagne, and we parted the best of friends. He told me the reasons, in his opinion, for the failure of the Greek Army in wartime, laying the blame on the ministers, diplomats, Headquarter Staff, etc., and assured me that Greek *soldiers* could sweep the Turks off the face of the earth! . . . I'm glad the embarkation is *a fait accompli*. Three times at least I might have made a holy smash-up of the business, and endless complications would have ensued, for I was hampered by the Laws of Neutrality (which I broke), by various other rules of International Law (which I broke), and by the Laws of the Cretan Blockade (which I broke). There was nothing else to do, and I wound up by sending the last batch of Greeks to sea and never tried to report that fact till they were half-way to Athens, for which I think all the admirals at Suda were thankful."

He wrote from Canea on June 7th :—

" At present we are doing nothing, and things are going from bad to worse. There is no law, civil or military, in the towns, and in the interior there is chaos. We talk of autonomy for Crete, but nothing is being done. Now the Turks are being shifted from Candia to Canea. . . . One hears lots of claptrap about the Mussulmans and

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Christians of Crete. People at home don't realise that both are Cretans. It is very much like the situation in Ireland where Black Protestants and bigoted Roman Catholics are eternally at one another's throats."

"On my ride to Alikanu on May 18th, when I visited both the Greek and the insurgent camps on my own responsibility and sat down in a circle of ferocious-looking beings armed to the teeth, one of the insurgents, to my surprise, spoke English. I asked him where he learnt it, and he answered, 'Oh, I was at Oxford—at Balliol!' This was the celebrated Manos, a man of about 28, with Crete on the brain. He is a regular stormy petrel, and appears in the island with the first sign of trouble."

"*June 24th.*—CANEAE.—I have had rather a successful Jubilee dinner—I couldn't have it on Jubilee Day," (June 20th, 1897) "because the Consuls had an evening reception. My party consisted of Sir Alfred Biliotti (Consul-General), Amoretti (the Italian Commandant of the town), and Cerri (his second in command), Colonel Korolf (Russian), Colonel Fannin (French), Captain von Jedina (Austrian), and Major Jamieson and Captain Egerton, of the Seaforths. All went well, the band played admirably, and no one thought of leaving before midnight. My French was, luckily, in good order, and I proposed the Queen's health in that language, compounding all the other nationalities into a salad of European concert and happy *camaraderie*. I got slightly tangled now and then, but fortunately my audience was uncritical."

"The British Consul's Jubilee Day function was a great business. I sent up my cook and steward to help and a party of bluejackets to decorate, marines to wait, flags, lamps, etc., and the show on Tuesday evening was quite imposing. It was all out of doors and we rigged up a stage for the Highlanders to dance on. At midnight when we had smoked innumerable cigarettes in the garden we sat down to supper, about 110 of us, and the following nationalities helped to give three cheers for the Queen:—English,

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French, Italian, German, Russian, Austrian, Turkish, Greek, Cretan, Montenegrin and Egyptian. The guard at the gate was provided by the Seaforth Highlanders with whom were Albanian and Montenegrin Kavasses. After supper the Turkish Governor, inspired by champagne, did his best to dance a Highland fling on the platform accompanied by the pipes, an unrehearsed item of the *most* remarkable — . . . Two days ago I rode out with Major Jamieson and an escort of two Seaforths to see a little Christian town that had been utterly wrecked by Mussulmans. I have seen lots of Mussulman *houses* wrecked by Christians, but so far not an entire town of 4,000 inhabitants reduced to ruins. It was a dismal sight."

On July 2nd the *Hawke* went down from Canea to Candia to embark Turkish troops. Turkish Governors and C.O.'s created infinite confusion and gave great trouble.

"The only ray of light in the whole business was the Turkish soldier; ragged and dirty, boots all in holes, but patient and willing. I have just heard that their authorities put off feeding them till the order had been given for them to embark and then told them not to eat or they would be seasick and spoil the appearance of the English man-of-war! They obeyed without a murmur. We got them all on board that evening, 350 with 35 horses and mules. The upper deck looked appalling, but the Turks were joyous and sat on piles of straw and anything else that was inflammable and smoked cigarettes. The idea that all this might catch fire struck them as very amusing and they were perfectly amenable when removed. After a smooth trip to Candia we put them ashore and set to work to scrub and disinfect. The Turkish officers were perfectly useless, but the quickness of the men and their excellent management of the disembarkation were remarkable. They are fine soldiers.

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. . . It is curious to look back in the Blue-books and see how very much one revolution in Crete resembles another. The Christian murders the Turk and the Turk retaliates, and each one blames the other and complains to the Consuls. The Consuls wire home reports of frightful massacres ; their Governments order them to make careful enquiries, and it is found that all the massacred women and children and most of the men are back again inside whole skins. They *do* shoot each other a good deal, but that is more a personal matter, a custom of the country in peace or war, like the vendetta in Corsica or Sicily."

Rear-Admiral Harris had thanked my husband both verbally and by signal for having successfully carried through an undeniably difficult piece of work, and one all the more delicate because necessarily performed under the close observation of the naval representatives of so many European Powers, but I do not suppose that another soul in the world knew as I did what tangles Dick had to unravel, what long hours he worked, and what constant vigilance was needed in dealing with such slippery customers as Turks, Greeks and Cretans, while consulates and chancelleries were on the alert to mark what was done amiss. The British public can scarcely be expected to realise how many pieces of intricate diplomacy are confided to the simple and unsophisticated sailor, because, in the majority of instances, no publicity can be given to the facts, and no recognition of his services is likely to be made by a Cabinet occupied with a General Election, a bill dealing with trade disputes, or the claims and counter-claims of Ireland, North and South.

EGYPT

CHAPTER LVIII

EGYPT

IN the following October I rejoined my husband at Malta, but the *Hawke* did not remain there long. Some weeks before Christmas she took up her billet as *stationnaire* at Alexandria, and Mrs. Ellis and I secured our passages in the *Clyde*, a P. and O. running *viâ* Malta between Marseilles and Alexandria and generally crowded with opulent British "swallows." We were left sitting on our boxes for three whole days after the *Clyde* was due, and consternation naturally prevailed in the island, for to be three days late on a run of sixty hours is unusual. The ship had broken down badly in the Gulf of Lions, and with the utmost difficulty limped into harbour at Malta. There she was hurriedly patched up, and "the Great 'Awke and the Little 'Awke," as we were called, gladly abandoned an attitude of agitated expectancy and set off in her for Egypt.

My sister Rosy and her husband still occupied their dear old Turkish house near the Arsenal at Alexandria, and there Mrs. Ellis and I spent our first days, moving later into two flats on the top floor of the British Consulate. My flat faced the harbour and was wretchedly cold and draughty, but there was a warm welcome from many old friends not seen since 1884 to cheer us, and before very long the weeks were racing by. I was, however, no longer the irresponsible being who had

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danced and laughed through the gay days and nights in 1883—84, for Dick was now a person of considerable importance. Multitudes of people called on Mrs. Ellis and myself, and the returning of visits in a great city whose streets now boasted legible names though their houses were undistinguished by numbers was something of a trial. The suburbs were far worse, for there no aid whatever was afforded to the unpractised visitor, and we called on several people innocent of any wish for our acquaintance and left unvisited others who had shown us politeness or hospitality.

Every week the *Hawkes* had a regatta, after which there was dancing on board, and on these occasions I found that a minimum of pleasure fell to my share. But the *Hawkes* were so kind, their attitude towards their captain's wife so engaging in its confidence, that I could not fail them, and I think it was at Alexandria that winter that I began to realise how much a captain's wife owes to a ship like the *Hawke*. If only for her credit I had to be punctilious in returning visits and put behind me all thought of amusing myself when called on to help in entertaining the ship's guests. Still, I was given many opportunities for diversion ashore, and it was half-funny and half-sad to recognise in staid fathers of families and *posé* bachelors the partners of my youth.

By good luck my nephew Hugh Blomfield, coming out to spend his holidays at Alexandria, was able to escort Roger, and for three weeks we had our boy with us. He had quite forgotten the French he had learnt at Paramé and Veules, and acquired in its place the

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British schoolboy's contempt for all things foreign. Hugh told us that on landing at Calais Roger surveyed the scene with great disfavour. "Just look at that beastly French lamp-post!" was his first comment. In what the poor lamp-post fell short of its English brothers I cannot say. Probably it erred in not being British. Roger was very happy at Alexandria, and when he was with us in Cairo and someone asked him what he thought of that wonderful city he answered, "I like Alexandria best." "Alexandria!" exclaimed his friend in amazement. "Why," cried Roger, equally surprised; "don't you know the *Hawke's* there?"

Cairo differed lamentably from the Cairo we had known in the 'eighties. It overflowed with rich Americans and the smartest of smart Britons. For us the bazaars had lost their charm, since, in place of the grave and dignified merchants—Turkish, Syrian or Arab—of the Mooskee, mean-faced little Jews and Levantines sprang up on all sides, teasing us to buy in broken cockney English embellished with Yankee slang and even clawing at our sleeves in the endeavour to attract our notice. Every child in the place had learnt to demand *baksheesh*, donkey-riding was no longer "the thing," and the *pseudo*-Oriental shabbiness and scanty furniture of the *hôtels* had given place to a stuffy banality purely European. East had done more than meet West at Cairo; West had overlapped, and in the process had not only vulgarised the place but demoralised a people who before the British occupation possessed Oriental virtues as well as Oriental vices.

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dredgers from the canal cleared the sand away from round her bows with their "vacuum cleaner" apparatus, and an empty petroleum tank ship drawing very little water towed the *Victorious*, a few yards at a time, out of the pit of wet sand where she had lain for the best part of a fortnight. This ingenious plan, devised by one of the port authorities of Port Said, proved quite successful, and at last the poor monster was released and got back into the fairway. The funny part of it all was that the Government had particularly wished to "slip her through the Canal" on her way to China "without attracting attention," though how a 15,000-ton battleship could be slipped through the Suez Canal unnoticed is a problem. Short of an absolute phenomenon such as the passing of a camel through a needle's eye nothing can be more noticeable than a battleship going through the Canal.

The Court-martial on the captain and navigator of the *Victorious* was held at Port Said, with Rear-Admiral Sir Gerard Noel presiding, and there were now so many ships of our Mediterranean Squadron in port that there was some risk of exceeding the number permitted by international convention. The moment the trial was over our ships dispersed, and as the *Hawke* was to return direct to Malta, there was nothing for me to do but go back to Alexandria and pack my boxes.

In a nice steady tramp-steamer I followed my husband to Malta, where I was once more regarded with disfavour by the health authorities, though whether I was suspected of bringing cholera or plague I cannot

GOOD-BYE TO THE *HAWKE*

now remember. They decided, however, not to send me to the lazaretto in Quarantine Harbour, only requiring that I should present myself daily for the ensuing fortnight at Sliema Police Station. This I never failed to do, and every morning at noon a Maltese doctor shook me warmly by the hand—his was not very clean—and asked me “Are you very well?” I was always very well.

CHAPTER LIX

GOOD-BYE TO THE *HAWKE*

WE had not been many weeks at Malta after our return from Egypt when the appointment of my husband to the battleship *Illustrious*, just completed at Chatham, caused us consternation rather than satisfaction. It was promotion, of course, but to say good-bye to the *Hawke* was grievous, and I know my husband felt like Napoleon when he turned his back on the humbler but more engaging Josephine and wedded the Austrian Archduchess.

The valedictory kindness of the *Hawkes* made the parting all the harder. On the Sunday preceding our departure for England the officers were photographed on the quarter-deck, and I, proud but with an aching heart, accepted their invitation to be the only lady in the group. There was a farewell dinner too; but

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the climax came on the morning of our departure by the Rubattino steamer for Syracuse. When we arrived at the landing-place in Grand Harbour a ship's cutter manned by officers lay waiting to take us off to the *Asia*, and the ladies connected with the *Hawke* were gathered in a little group on the steps. I bade them good-bye and stumbled blindly into the cutter, which but for Commander Hamilton's imperturbable cheerfulness might have been swamped by my tears. "Here are some flowers for you," he said briskly, and laid a sheaf of perfect Spanish irises on my lap. "I had the thing made flat on one side so that you could lay it down. Round bouquets must be such a nuisance." Then he produced a wooden box and from the box a beautiful silver bowl of old Neapolitan design, its graceful lid surmounted by a well-modelled bird with a hooked beak. "We *think* it's a hawk," explained the Commander; "and now, when you've done looking at it, I'm going to take it away because we want to have your name and the date and 'H.M.S. *Hawke*' engraved on the foot of the bowl. Then it will follow you to England." Even I was speechless, and not until the Commander had despatched an attendant midshipman on board the *Hawke* for a ship ribbon to tie round the stems of my irises did I find words of any sort in which to thank my "shipmates." I don't know when I have swallowed so much salt water—not even when I took my first header in the creek at Parknasilla—as I did on that short trip to the Italian steamer, for, with twelve officers opposite me pulling and the Commander steering, common decency

GOOD-BYE TO THE *HAWKE*

demanded dry eyes. Then came the handshaking and the good wishes, and there was a breathless midshipman bearing a bunch of *Hawke* ribbons to be thanked.

To pass the well-beloved cruiser as the *Asia* made her way out of harbour was bad enough, but when the *Hawkes* "cheered ship" in my husband's honour I felt I could bear no more. Just as I was hoping the "seclusion of the cabin" would "grant" me a chance of indulging in a good cry the *Asia's* captain appeared at my door with a queer-looking object in his hand, and I *had* to laugh, for the object was a belt in the centre of which was a heart-shaped lump of gutta-percha—a patent dodge for the prevention of seasickness! It was called the Cintura Galleana after its inventor, and the captain had promised Signor Galleana that he would experiment with it upon such of his passengers as were notoriously bad sailors. I said I would wear it, and on his withdrawal the stewardess strapped it tightly round my person, with the hard heart, well inflated, pressing so painfully against the points of my ribs that it would have hurt me very much indeed if I had permitted myself to cry. The sea was as flat as ice; not even I could be seasick; yet when I left my cabin at Syracuse I yielded to the captain's entreaties and wrote a beautiful testimonial to the efficacy of the Cintura Galleana.

Sicily in April is "a land of pure delight," and our three days at Taormina should have helped to diminish the poignancy of my regrets. But, like Roger who was unable to appreciate Cairo because the *Hawke* was at Alexandria, I failed to enjoy the beauty of Taormina's

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE IN THE MAKING

rose-red amphitheatre, the snowy breast of Etna and the shore below with its tufted edging of starry mesembryanthemum, for I had left my heart at Malta and was not yet ready to grow a new one for the *Illustrious*.

CHAPTER LX

COMMISSIONING THE *ILLUSTRIOUS*

WE arrived in England on a cheerless spring day, and next morning my husband went down to Chatham to make the acquaintance of his new command. It took him three weeks of hard work to become passably familiar with perhaps one-third of her internal economy, and those of the Dockyard hands who were still at work upon her regarded the interloper in very old plain clothes and big brown gauntlets with a suspicion that changed to amazement when they discovered he was the captain of the *Illustrious*. On May 10th the ship commissioned, and then I went down to Rochester where I put up at the "Bull," a hostelry at that period more famous in fiction than in fact.*

We were at Chatham for the Queen's Birthday Review on the Lines, and I shall never forget seeing the Union Jack at the saluting point flying upside down until Captain Hammick, commanding the dépôt-ship *Pembroke*, hauled it down and hoisted it right

* Dickens made this inn the scene of revelries in which Mr. Pickwick and his friends took part.

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way up. I had gone to the review with the Dean of Rochester and Mrs. Hole, to whom we had been recommended by a friend at Malta—Mrs. Kirke. She deserved our gratitude. The Holes should not have been mortal. They possessed the secret of perpetual youth—a peculiar grace and freshness belonging only to those who have a perennial interest in all that lives and grows.

After ten days of cold roast beef at lunch and hot roast beef at dinner, salad and cheese to follow the one and rhubarb tart the other, I was greedily pleased to leave Rochester and find myself the guest at Admiralty House, Sheerness, of Sir Charles and Lady Hotham, whom I had never met before. But I had only just sat down to tea after my arrival when the Commander-in-Chief came in to tell me that the *Illustrious* had broken a blade off one of her propellers when the Dockyard people at Chatham were getting her out of the basin and though she had come down the river and was lying at Black Stakes, she would have to take the next tide back to Chatham. This was annoying for all concerned, and back I went to Rochester next morning—but not to the “Bull.” The Dean and Mrs. Hole, hearing of our plight, invited us to the Deanery, and for five days we were under that most hospitable roof. The Dean was so very much more than the witty *raconteur* we had expected to find, for he would tell a story against himself with as much zest as though he were its hero instead of its victim. He was a most picturesque figure. His towering height and his leonine head with its thick white hair were valuable

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accessories, but I should have loved him if I had been stone blind. I shall never forget his coming down from the drawing-room, ere the last laggard guests at a clerical dinner-party had left, to implore his wife, with whom Dick and I were picnicking in a small sitting-room on the ground floor, to come up and help him to entertain these limpets. "I've used up all my topics," said the poor Dean piteously; "I simply haven't another idea in my head"; so we all went up, and the effort of being nice, but not too nice lest these reverend stayers should remain till midnight, brought us within measurable distance of imbecility before they took their leave. Then we adjourned to the cozy study and "blew out our cheeks." The Dean went off at once and changed his gaiters, a simple action that seemed to afford him great relief, and then, in defiance of his wife's protests, produced two large cigars (which he had been forbidden to smoke), one for himself and one for Dick. "You have buttoned your gaiters all crooked, Reynolds," said Mrs. Hole. "I don't care, my dear," cried the Dean mutinously; "indeed, I buttoned them like that on purpose. Somehow or other these clerical meetings make me want to do everything that is wild and reprehensible. I wonder why it is."

Next day I came in from the Dockyard very late for lunch to find the Archbishop of Canterbury (Temple) and the Bishop of Rochester (Talbot) already at table with my hosts. With such distinguished teetotallers present barley water circulated freely, and I should have been quite glad to drink some myself had not the Bishop of Rochester taken for granted that I desired

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this simple and refreshing beverage and poured me out so generous a measure that it overflowed upon the table-cloth. "Oh, thank you, my lord," I said deprecatingly, "but I *never* drink barley water," and, moved by an uncontrollable impulse to appear dissipated, I asked the Dean to give me a glass of claret. I was now quite able to comprehend and sympathise with his little attack of contrariness on the previous evening, for my perverseness in drinking the claret I did not want was closely allied to the feeling which had forced him to misbutton his gaiters and smoke a large cigar.

As soon as the propeller of the *Illustrious* had been repaired she made a fresh start, and I returned to Sheerness, where I spent some pleasant days with the Hothams and the Manns before the ship sailed for Malta. She only got as far as Portsmouth, because, in addition to the infantile diseases common to ships which have not had time to "find themselves," the *Illustrious* was affected with leaky steampipes. Leaky steampipes are as serious a trouble in a ship as is tuberculosis in a human being, and many a harassing hour did this ailment cause my husband and the Chief Engineer. The latter took me down to the engine-room one day after the ship had been nine months in commission and explained her defects so beautifully that I understood the situation perfectly for quite twenty-four hours. Then the heavy cloud that obscures that portion of my mind where an intelligent interest in machinery should reside closed down again, and I can only remember what a flange looks like.

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE IN THE MAKING

At Portsmouth the *Illustrious*, as a Chatham-built and Chatham-manned ship, was nobody's child, and lay alongside forlorn and unloved while her Captain struggled valiantly to have her needs attended to.

The *Crescent*, newly commissioned by the present King—then Duke of Cornwall and York—was also at Portsmouth, and it chanced that my husband and I were bidden to dine with the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Michael Culme-Seymour) and Lady Culme-Seymour at Admiralty House to meet the Duke and Duchess. It was not a large party, and after dinner Dick and I found ourselves making a *partie carrée* in the drawing-room with the Royal guests. The Captain of the *Crescent* and his wife talked with the Captain of the *Illustrious* and his wife of the joys and sorrows of commissioning a ship. The choice of chair-covers and of shades for the electric lights in the captain's cabins were topics apparently as absorbing to the Duchess as they were to myself, and Dick and I went back to our rooms in Southsea Terrace with a comfortable confidence in the human interest and human kindness of the two young people destined to play so great a part for England and the Empire.

By the time the *Illustrious* got away from Portsmouth I had been able to make the acquaintance of a good many of her officers and one or two of their wives. Commander Baker-Baker I found one of the kindest and straightest of men; I had already begun to argue with Commander Hughes-Hughes, her navigator, and had completely lost my heart to Mrs. Victor

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Stanley, wife of the first lieutenant* ; but until I had been for a month or two at Malta I was unable to master the names, much less the characteristics, of her full complement of twenty-four gunroom officers.

CHAPTER LXI

ILLUSTRIOUS PLUS HAWKE

IN October I went out to the Mediterranean once more and settled down in my old quarters at Sliema. Captain Randolph Foote now commanded the *Hawke*, and it distressed me to see her lying in Grand Harbour two berths astern of the *Illustrious*, so near and yet so far. Church on board the latter ship was indeed a trial. A miserably-handled harmonium made, in my opinion, a poor accompaniment to the men's voices, for I was used to the little band of four stringed instruments—first and second violins, tenor and 'cello—which had supported the *Hawke's* harmonium played by a signalman of talent, and I said as much after my first Sunday's experience. Next Sunday I deliberately went to church on board the *Hawke*, and when a large company of officers of both ships turned up at Sliema at tea-time I asked Captain Dixon, R.M.A., of the *Illustrious*, with a brutality of which I was soon ashamed, whether the same "pig" had played the harmonium that morning. "No," he replied blandly,

* Now Captain the Hon. Victor Stanley.

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"it was another pig," and a shout of laughter greeted his answer. "What is so funny?" I asked. "I was the pig," explained Captain Dixon! I was indeed abashed and continued to be abashed, for the following Sunday the music in the new ship was excellent. Signor Bascetta, the bandmaster, himself a fine violinist and excellent conductor, had told off four bandsmen to accompany Captain Dixon, and henceforth I had no reason to desert my own proper place of worship—the wide quarter-deck of the *Illustrious*. If the officers of that ship had been in league to make me like them they could not have been more successful. Now and then a severe pang of regret for the old ship would wring my heart. Driving with Mrs. Foote one day I met a string of too-hilarious ordinary seamen dashing along the road on poor little broken-down polo ponies, and every man of them had an *Illustrious* ribbon on his hat! The sight infuriated me, and when I went back to tea with Mrs. Foote in Piazza Miratore and looked down from her balcony upon the beautiful little *Hawke*, so slim and smart and shining in the evening glow, I felt I wanted to throw over the big new *Illustrious* and be a *Hawke* once more. I was unpardonably exacting, for I had not lost my *Hawke* friends, and had gained in the *Illustrious* many new ones who proved as time went on as true and helpful, as kind and cheerful as I could desire. Even the bumboatman attached to the *Illustrious*, Baptist Borda, who, instead of dear old Tabona, now brought me flowers, found his way to my affections by his disinterested goodness to the young and inexperienced

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wives of some of the men of the *Illustrious*. I could no longer think of the new ship as the uninteresting Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria, though the *Hawke* was still our Josephine—our *grande passion*.

Two very dear friends of ours came out to Malta in 1898—Sir Robert Arbuthnot, Commander of the *Royal Sovereign*, and his wife. Sir Robert had appeared over our horizon as a young lieutenant in the *Active* in 1885, and Lady Arbuthnot became our friend in the following year when, as Lina Macleay, she was just emerging from the schoolroom. They first met at our house, and almost from that moment I was the confidant of Sir Robert, a most faithful knight whose indomitable persistence was finally crowned with success. His was a very strong and remarkable personality, and to those who knew him as we did his glorious death in the Battle of Jutland seemed not only the right end for one who had always put the Service first, but the happiest end, since his extraordinary vitality, his curiously simple code of honour and duty, had kept him young even after hoisting his flag and made the idea of old age or diminished activity one impossible to conceive in connection with him. He was not always right, but he was the straightest man I ever knew. He never asked of others what he had not done, or would not do, himself, and men who began by regarding him as cruelly despotic grew to admire him for his thoroughness and to love him because he was essentially lovable. A few weeks after the Battle of Jutland I met a commander who had been serving under him until the day before his death.

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He was not an emotional young man, but his eyes shone strangely as he said, "I loved 'Robert.'" We loved Robert too, for there was never a firmer friend nor a braver sailor than Robert Arbuthnot.

It was in the early spring of 1899 that the German Emperor visited Malta in his great yacht, the *Hohenzollern*. We watched her come into Grand Harbour and bungle badly in picking up her moorings. A signalman had previously reported that she was "flying the in-cog-nye-toe flag"! The Emperor William *incognito* was a delightful contradiction in terms, and I remember prophesying that such modesty would be short-lived, for I could not believe he had one suit of really plain clothes in his ample wardrobe; and I was right. He landed as a British Admiral of the Fleet at the earliest possible moment, and for the entire period of his visit he played the part of the bluff and hearty sailor. When Dick's cockney valet came out one day to Sliema with a message I asked him if he had seen the Emperor. "No, m' lady, an' don't want to, neether. It's my opinion 'e makes 'isself too common."

When the Emperor visited the Dockyard the *Illustrious* was seated in dry-dock, very dishevelled and patchy with red lead. Her captain and commander stood at the foot of the gangway and saluted as the great man came along. "Ah, Captain Poore, how beautiful your ship looks!" said he; "just like a blushing maiden arrayed for her first ball." If this comment was intended for sarcasm it was a poor attempt, for the ship looked more like a moulting

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barn-door hen having a dust bath than anything else, but the "humour" of the Emperor William was never subtle. At the end of his stay he bestowed decorations upon such persons as were permitted by our regulations to accept these marks of favour, and Sir John Hopkins' steward, Casey, was much worried when he received a gold medal liberally inscribed in German characters, for not a soul at Malta knew its value or import.

CHAPTER LXII

PLEASANT DUTIES

THE late Admiral Sir Francis Sullivan was in the habit of passing his winters in the 'nineties at Malta. He was an invalid, but able to enjoy the sunshine and the naval society afforded by the island, and Lady Sullivan watched over him with the discreet devotion of a wise and tender wife. She was elderly, but she was beautiful, with raven hair parted in the centre and blue eyes made more brilliant by contrast with their dark brows and lashes. She had a sort of compelling power, and when she told me I *must* become a member of the Friendly Union of Sailors' Wives founded some years previously by Mrs. Goodenough I at once obeyed her. Luckily for me Mrs. Arthur May, wife of the Fleet-Surgeon of the *Empress of India*,*

* Now Sir Arthur May, Director-General of Hospitals and Fleets.

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was living at Valletta at this period, and the friendship already growing up between us progressed with lightning rapidity when we found ourselves leagued together in the work of helping sailors' wives at Malta. Many of these were young and inexperienced, few had been outside the British Isles before they set off for Malta, and their ignorance of its climatic conditions and a dozen other matters more or less important made them an easy prey to fever or the rapacity of landlords. It was as helpers and interpreters rather than teachers and preachers that Mrs. May and I embarked upon our duties, and when each of us had been provided with a list of names we set off to the far side of Grand Harbour on our first round of visits. The *premier pas* is sometimes extremely *coûteux*, and I trembled as I knocked repeatedly and without result at the door of a forbidding-looking house in Vittorioso. As the door was ajar I ventured to penetrate into a dark and empty passage, and was standing, undecided what to do, at the foot of the stair when an inhospitable male voice called from above, "Who's there?" For a few seconds I could not think what to say. The boldness, and indeed impropriety, of calling uninvited and unexpected upon total strangers to whom my name could convey nothing struck me painfully, but at last I stammered out, "Oh, I am only a friendly wife!" "The lady here is ill in bed," said the voice, whose owner was now peeping over the bannisters; "perhaps you'll call again another day." "Yes, of course I will," I replied, rather too cheerfully, and fled. I did return a week later to find a pretty, fragile-looking woman

PLEASANT DUTIES

sitting up in bed with a dark-browed Marine husband waiting upon her. He was a very active member of the Salvation Army and I was rather afraid of him, but we became such good friends that I subscribed to the funds of the Salvation Army at his request. Mrs. May and I found after a little experience that our visits were undoubtedly of use, for we could tell ailing women about the English nurses of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association in Valletta and give them various other pieces of information they were glad to have. Once, in the height of summer when the ship was away, I borrowed the Admiral Superintendent's big barge and conveyed a poor fever-stricken *Illustrious* wife to the hospital of the Blue Nuns, those most admirable nurses, at Sliema, where she recovered, as she could never have done in the stifling, sunless atmosphere of Vittorioso. This was in itself no great deed (though I was very nearly seasick on the way), but it shows that an officer's wife can usefully help those who are not in a position to help themselves. The men's wives do not always know of the existence of the machinery which may serve them, or if they know of its existence they may believe themselves powerless to set it in motion. The ink is dry in the bottle and baby has broken the pen when the idea of writing to someone—anyone of the class that is able to help—occurs to them. So they drift into ill-health or debt and all the concomitant miseries of poor lodgings and friendlessness, and when the ship comes back brandy may have taken the place of the human comfort they so badly needed, or fever and lassitude without the alleviations

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of skilled nursing and change of air reduced the bonnie English girl of a year before to a pitiful wreck. Soldiers' wives on the strength are recognised by Government in peace-time as well as war-time. Married quarters, not always attractive, exist for them, but for the sailor's wife in peace-time there is no provision. She pays her own passage to Malta, she lives as she may in an insanitary tenement house, and if those able and qualified to do so fail to look after her she may die with no friend beside her but the Maltese landlady, who will at least close her eyes and take care that she is speedily buried.

Besides visiting the sailors' wives I often went to the big Naval Hospital at Bighi to see both officers and men. In those days the habitat of the Malta fever germ was still undiscovered, but some years later it was traced to the goats' milk commonly drunk on the island and kept flowing with particular lavishness in our naval and military hospitals. There it was no unusual thing for a patient who had lost a finger or toe in some accident to develop Malta fever and die of that. If he drank the milk served out to him he imbibed poisonous germs; if he was a milk-hater he was insufficiently nourished; and I have known officers to save half a round of bread or toast from their tea so as to have something to eat later on when supper-time brought them nothing but a glass of the milk they abominated.

It is a great pleasure to visit people who are sure to give one a welcome. That is why no visits are more agreeable to the visitor than those paid to patients in

QUEER CAPTAINS

hospital, bored enough to welcome even an enemy, and when the ship was away and I was feeling lonely or out of sorts I would ask Tabona or Borda for a *dghaisa* and betake myself to Bighi. It was something of an expedition from Sliema, but I never failed to be glad I had gone, never returned without feeling ashamed of my own tendency to fume at small annoyances or fuss over small ailments.

CHAPTER LXIII

QUEER CAPTAINS

THE winter of 1898—99 was a very gay one and the great ball at the Palace in Carnival week a sight worth seeing. Sir Francis Grenfell* was then Governor of Malta, and his pretty niece, Miss Florita Grenfell (who became Mrs. Guy St. Aubyn shortly after), made a charming hostess. No setting could have been more picturesque than that made by the wide corridors, lofty saloons, and pillared refectory for the crowd of guests in fancy dress who filled them. I had chosen to get myself up as the wife of the Vicar of Wakefield (Dame Primrose), and was distinctly annoyed to find the dress set down as "Primrose Dame" in the *Malta Chronicle* next morning! My husband had sent out invitations to a small dance (fancy-dress optional)

* Now Lord Grenfell.

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on board the *Illustrious* a night or two later, but as he was unlucky enough to be laid low with an unusually sharp attack of Indian fever I had to take his place and receive the guests. Thanks to the Commander, and, indeed, all the officers, the dance went off quite pleasantly, but an incident which had occurred in the morning ruffled my composure so seriously that I found it hard to regain the agreeable equanimity proper to a good hostess.

While Lady Arbuthnot and I were in the fore-cabin arranging the flowers for the supper-tables the captain of the *K*—— came on board to see me and with a profusion of explanations and apologies begged that I would forthwith send an invitation to his friend, Commander ——. There was nothing surprising in this, though I confess I did not see why I should ask a man who had never troubled to call on me to a private dance of not more than fifty couples, and of course I said I should be delighted to send a card to Commander ——. With thanks in proportion to his apologies the *K*——'s captain departed, and I had but just written the card for his friend when his steward was announced. I took the note from the man who had been instructed to deliver it into my hands, and as I drew it from the envelope out fell another kind of note—a Bank of England one for five pounds! At that I gasped, but when I had read what the sender of the money had to say I was furious. The messenger had luckily withdrawn to the lobby to wait for an answer, and I had no witnesses of my confusion but Lady Arbuthnot and Commander Baker-Baker.

QUEER CAPTAINS

"On the occasion of your marriage with my old friend Poore" (this was fourteen years previously!), the letter ran, "I omitted to send you a wedding present. I had thought of finding you some trifle when my ship goes shortly to Naples, but I am sure your own exquisite taste will enable you to use the enclosed to greater advantage. Thanking you most warmly for your kindness in according to my friend Commander — the honour of an invitation to your dance,]

"Believe me, etc., etc."

Captain Baker-Baker's ruddy face took a deeper tinge and Lady Arbuthnot's was a study in horrified amazement when I read aloud the communication explaining, to the writer's satisfaction alone, the "windfall" which lay on the deck at my feet. We could only suppose that my generous friend had been unlucky enough to associate with women who expected to be paid for asking strangers to their parties. We, belonging to another stratum of society, either higher or lower, were frankly shocked and disgusted.

That night the *K*——'s captain pursued and surrounded me with attentions that I, as his hostess, was unable to resent, but I hope his conscience woke up and bit him when he received my letter returning his precious five-pound note on the following morning.

When Dick was well enough to hear this "queer story" without risk of a relapse I related it to him. I had sometimes thought it a pity that duelling had been abolished, but I was thankful for it when I saw how ferocious he looked before I had finished.

The captain of the *K*—— was a most extraordinary character, and it was only charitable to suppose that

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his solitary life—he was a confirmed bachelor—had affected his perspicacity and rendered him absent-minded. One afternoon he came on board the *Illustrious*. Dick, duly apprised of his approach, went on deck to greet him and was surprised to find himself welcomed with great heartiness by his visitor who invited him to come down and have tea. When they reached my husband's cabins he looked round with a puzzled air and cried, "God bless my soul! I thought I was on board my own ship." Now his ship, though of much the same tonnage as the *Illustrious*, was of a totally different type, and he was a man of absolutely unimpeachable sobriety. Many were the yarns told of this officer's eccentricities, and the funniest of all I had from the navigator of a cruiser he had commanded in the early 'nineties. Finding this officer in the chart-house he asked him to point out the ship's position at the moment. Mr. W—— showed him the precise spot on the chart. The sign indicated *No bottom*.* "Very dangerous," said the captain, with a clouded brow; "very dangerous indeed, Mr. W——."

The captain of a ship has some excuse for eccentricity.

The unquestioned supremacy he usually enjoys is even less wholesome for his character than are the meals he eats in solitary state for his digestion. If he has no dog he takes his exercise alone, for the honour of being his companion is rarely coveted by his subordinates, and in the old days when ships

* The deep sounding apparatus failed to touch bottom at that point.

QUEER CAPTAINS

remained longer at sea and commissions sometimes extended over four years a captain who had been cheerfully gregarious as a commander not infrequently became odd to the verge of insanity. At a place like Malta a captain finds other captains more or less congenial with whom to consort, but in out-of-the-way ports he is likely to be a very lonely man, and if he has no hobby and is not a book-worm he has too many empty hours in which to grow warped and cranky for want of a comrade with whom to yarn or to argue.

An unmarried captain is not without advantages, but the arrival of a mail from England is no great event for him, and when he pays his ship off he has often no home to go to, no domestic joys in which to forget his official importance, no wife to contradict him for the good of his soul. He sometimes marries in sheer desperation, impelled by the crying need of a comfortable home, and it is then a toss-up whether, after a protracted bachelorhood, he proves suited or not for double harness. He may be set in his ways, groovy and faddy, autocratic and disposed to take command of his house as though it were a ship and of his wife as though she were a mere first lieutenant. Only a very wise woman will know how to get her own way in those departments where she has a right to be supreme, for he will want to hold weekly inspections of his house from kitchen to garret, to apply the Naval Discipline Act to his servants, to drill his children as though they were boys in a training-ship, and will regard himself as omnipotent, omniscient and infallible. His passion for punctuality will be a burden,

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his love of order a mania, and when he leaves the Service he will inevitably prove a domestic tyrant. By the time his children are grown up he will be an old man, unable to sympathise with them in their work or their play, passionately averse to losing his daughters by matrimony, and alienating his sailor son by his openly-expressed contempt for the modern Navy. He had better far have married as a lieutenant or commander, for he would then have been young along with his wife and not so far removed by age from his children as to be incapable of understanding the faults he must correct or pardon. Sometimes a sailor who marries at fifty falls into a softness as deplorable as the hardness of the martinet husband and father. He no longer cares for his profession, his talk is of babies and household matters, he wallows in the ease and comfort provided by a wife who is little more than a perfect housekeeper. The retirement of such a man will be welcomed by his erstwhile friends and frankly rejoiced over by subordinates weary of the nursery anecdotes which form the staple of his conversation.

I once heard of a captain whose head was turned by the birth of his first child. When it was a day old he sent for the petty officer in charge of liberty men going ashore at Portsmouth and ordered him to take the party to the house in Southsea where the infant was residing so that they should all have an opportunity of admiring it. The P. O. obeyed, and presently no less than one hundred and fifty bluejackets were drawn up outside the door of No. —, Ashburton Road, while the leading hand rang the door bell. An amazed

“FAREWELL AND ADIEU”

parlourmaid appeared. “We’ve come to see the baby, Captain’s orders,” said the P. O. “But you can’t,” protested the maid. “We must, miss—Captain’s orders.” “Well, I’ll ask the nurse,” said the reluctant girl. The nurse was indignant, for it was a bitterly cold day in March and the infant could not be exposed to the air. Finally she consented to the admission of the men in parties of ten and permitted them to survey the little bald, red-faced pinch of humanity for whose well-being she was responsible.

When the leave party returned on board the captain sent for the P. O. “Well, what did you think of the boy?” “Begging your pardon, sir, we all thought him uncommonly like the Major of Marines.” The Major of Marines had a very round red face and scarcely a hair on his head.

CHAPTER LXIV

“FAREWELL AND ADIEU”

IN the first week of May, 1899, the Squadron sailed for the Levant, and instead of returning to England with the greater number of officers’ wives I remained on at Malta to await the return of the ship in July. I was, however, no longer at Sliema, but had moved to Florian, where a newly-opened hôtel promised better things. It was very hot, but there were many allevia-

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tions. Lady Arbuthnot remained at Valletta; I bathed every day at Ricasoli where a friendly P.M.O. let me use his bathing-house, and the mornings and evenings were delicious. I had time in abundance for reading, and the cessation of gaieties brought opportunities of comfortable intercourse with the friends who still lingered at Malta. But when the *Vulcan* returned alone from the Levant we were all willing enough to accept Captain Richard White's invitation to dance on board, for there never was a host who so enjoyed giving pleasure, and though our heads looked after a strenuous polka like those of the seals in the pond at the Zoo I cannot pretend we did not enjoy ourselves extremely.

There was scarcely a ship left at Malta when the *Hawke* went home to pay off. She had had four captains in less than three years, but my husband had commanded her for just half that period, and Sir John Hopkins had told him when he left her that the ship had never caused him one hour of uneasiness while he had been her captain. This was high praise from a Commander-in-Chief never lavish of encomium. From one of Borda's *dghaisas* I watched the beloved ship get under weigh one blazing afternoon in June. Commander Morgan Singer, previously her first lieutenant, paused for the fraction of a second on his way for'ard and saluted me, and very soon she was out of sight. I never saw the *Hawke* again, and I can always think of her as she looked that day, homeward bound—the smartest cruiser in the best of all possible navies.

Early in July the rest of the ships appeared, but the

DEATH OF MY FATHER

fortnight of their stay was darkened for all of us by the impending departure of Sir John Hopkins, retiring for age. He seemed too alert, too young, to have reached the end of his career, and the farewell dinner to him given by Captain Clement La Primandaye, R.N., Chief of Police, and his wife at Casa Leone, their beautiful old house beyond the squalid suburb of Hamrun, was all the sadder because our cheerfulness was so obviously galvanic. The Commander-in-Chief was the bravest of the party, and not for one moment, either that night or when he left the Station, did he let himself go. His adieu to the Fleet was very characteristic. His captains were hoping to give him the send-off he deserved, but he would have none of it, and his parting signal from the yacht *Surprise* forbade any demonstration. He was a true sportsman in every sense of the term.*

CHAPTER LXV

DEATH OF MY FATHER

ON my arrival in England news so serious awaited me that I crossed to Ireland by the next boat. Twelve hours after I reached his side my father breathed his last. He was conscious up to the end. His brain and heart died hard, for he still retained in his eighty-

* Sir John Hopkins died in 1916, a few months after his wife.

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE IN THE MAKING

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seventh year an unclouded intelligence and a strength of purpose that made his physical weakness the more pathetic. Several years before his death he had wished to resign his post, but had been dissuaded from doing so by his brother bishops, of whom he was the doyen, because they regarded his advice and experience as indispensable to them. He might have left the Church in Ireland, as many others did, when it was robbed of its ancient dignity by disestablishment and crippled by disendowment, for he was then still young enough to play a distinguished part in England, but he stuck to the ship in distress and strove unceasingly for the next thirty years to keep her timbers sound and prevent her from drifting. As a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and Dean of the Chapel Royal he had moved in a congenial circle—a circle of able men both lay and clerical. In his large diocese in the south-west of Ireland there was no centre of learning, no *coterie* of brilliant men, no artistic stars in its firmament nor literary giants upon its earth. A society composed almost entirely of hunting people and soldiers, merchants and parsons ; a cathedral perennially in need of repair ; a city of few amenities ; a climate peculiarly trying to delicate folk : these were what my father found in Limerick. I never heard him complain of the paucity of that companionship, spiritual and mental, which in Dublin had been so inspiring, but as he grew older and was for weeks and even months at a time confined to the house this must have irked him sorely. A deep thinker and catholic in his sympathies, learned in many arts and sciences, punctiliously correct

DEATH OF MY FATHER

in taste, speech and manner, he was impatient, not of genuine stupidity, ignorance or ineptitude, but of religious intolerance, of inaccuracy and of slovenliness. Cant and clap-trap revolted him. He was himself sparing in the use of hallowed words and phrases, because he would not cheapen them. To be for ever "improving the occasion," was not his way, but when he spoke seriously we hearkened. Of all things he abhorred a scene, and when he reproved us there was no appeal, for he never tolerated excuses. Quarrelling among ourselves in his presence was rigorously banned, and he was ever impatient of foolish jesting and giggling. His own humour was of the whimsical and *spirituel* order, sometimes almost impish—for a bishop!—but irony and sarcasm he regarded as weapons to be rarely used. In conversation he was fluent, always choosing, without seeking, the right word. The English language was sacred to him as the finest vehicle in the world for prose or poetry, and it hurt him to see or hear it mishandled and degraded. But he was not a great preacher. I used to think this was due to the reserve which was so remarkable a trait in his character. He never let himself go in the pulpit.

To us as children he was a charming story-teller. When I was quite small the tale of his encounter with a lion caused me a fearful joy and gave me bad dreams at night. As a very little boy wearing a belted tunic and socks he went with his father to visit Edmund Kean, the actor. On the way upstairs they met a lion coming down. It was not a full-grown lion, but it seemed to

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE IN THE MAKING

him very large. It did not roar, much less endeavour to bite, and my little father, clinging to his father's hand with both of his, reached the drawing-room in safety but with trembling legs. The poor lion came to a sad end. The cook did not like him and left him out in the area one cold night, with the result that he got a chill and died of inflammation of the lungs. We were all sorry for the lion, but I felt a certain sympathy with the cook.

Another story we loved to make him tell concerned an adventure in which his companion was a handsome girl of eighteen, by name Rosina Wheeler, his fellow-guest at the house of some old cousins in county Down, where he had been sent for change of air. Not far off there lived two maiden ladies who had in some manner offended Miss Wheeler, and she planned a revenge in which she insisted that my father, then nine years old, should bear a part. One dark night they set forth together, my father with his guitar slung over his shoulder, Rosina free as air. Arrived within earshot of her enemies' house, Rosina called a halt, and as they cowered behind a rampart of shrubs my father struck up a simple accompaniment to which the daring maiden sang these words :

“ The rose is red, the violet's blue,
The devil is black, and so are you.”

There were other verses, but these were perforce left unsung, for a sound of unbarring the front door startled the serenaders who took to their heels. My father was greatly hampered in his flight by the

DEATH OF MY FATHER

guitar, which banged against his knees as he ran, but the large and heartless Rosina, caring nothing for her small companion's fate, reached home in safety long before he did. This lady afterwards became the wife of the first Lord Lytton, whose married life was for many years the theme of much acrimonious discussion between his admirers and hers.

As must always be the case in a country whose population is divided into two religious camps, bigots, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, were numerous and vehement in my father's diocese, but I used to think some of the former were all the less zealous in carrying out their religious duties so as to mark the difference between themselves and their "priest-ridden" neighbours. Indeed, I once heard a woman of a certain age and average education remark that she did not like all the church-going in England because it was "too like the ways of Roman Catholics." In many parishes matins were not read until noon when my father became Bishop of Limerick, and he had some difficulty in persuading the incumbents that they were out of order in using in the afternoon the form of prayer for morning service. He journeyed throughout the length and breadth of Limerick and Kerry to inquire personally into the complaints of parsons and parishioners, and found himself one Sunday in a nearly empty church listening to a sermon so crazy that it appeared like something in a bad dream. When the service was over the very old rector met him in the churchyard. "Delighted to meet you, my lord. What did you think of my sermon?" said the old

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bones ; but there were too many of them, and I often wished Guernsey more like the desert island of my childish dreams, well supplied with water and palatable food and peopled only by a chosen band of happy castaways. The arrival of the *Curaçoa* at St. Peter Port was the great event of those holidays. It was the kindness of her navigator, Mr. Wintour,* that made it so for Roger and myself. Never was there so genial and entertaining a companion or host. All children loved him, and it is specially fitting that the memorial to himself and the Flotilla he commanded in the Battle of Jutland should take the form of the endowment of a ward for sailors' children in Sir W. Treloar's hospital.

Things were looking very black between ourselves and France in the early autumn of 1899, and my husband wrote from the Levant conjuring me not to travel *viâ* Paris and Marseilles to Malta without consulting someone qualified to advise me. I went to Messrs. Cocks and Biddulph's bank, and, on the reassuring information obtained from the Foreign Office by my old friend Mr. E. Somers-Cocks, decided to start on my journey, but I was recommended to go by the *Ceinture* railway to the Gare de Lyon, since some Americans, mistaken for Britons, had been pulled out of their *fiacre* and roughly handled as they drove through the streets. By bad luck the *Ceinture* train was taken off when I reached Paris—some suburban race meeting had disorganised the traffic—and I was

* Captain Charles Wintour, killed May 31st, 1916, when commanding the Fourth Destroyer Flotilla.

MY LAST WINTER AT MALTA

obliged to drive from one station to the other. No evil befell me, but my luggage remained behind at the Gare du Nord, whence I had not been permitted to remove it, and I had to embark for Malta with no personal effects beyond the contents of a travelling-bag and hold-all. Of course it was then quite hot at Malta, and for a whole fortnight I was dressed in such cool garments as could be hastily made, or in the misfits of kind friends of various dimensions. The *Illustrious* and my boxes arrived almost simultaneously, and for a while all was comfort and happiness. Then war was declared in South Africa.

A couple of cruisers were sent through the Canal to the Cape and many of the regulars in the garrison replaced by militia from home. Our friend Colonel H. Smith-Dorrien,* commanding the Sherwood Foresters, departed, so did Colonel Settle, C.R.E., and a corps of mounted infantry was made up from various regiments. For this service my young nephew, Charlie Blomfield, of the Warwickshire Regiment, was selected because he was a good horseman, and I missed his cheerful greetings across the narrow street we both inhabited in Florian where his regiment was quartered and the gay sound of his violin which he would sometimes play at his open window for my entertainment.

It was a dark autumn and a black winter. As the weeks went on the general depression augmented, and the Maltese themselves were so worried by visions of their beloved island transformed from a British to a Boer possession that they displayed an unusual polite-

* General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.

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ness and even cordiality towards us of the dominant race. The day the relief of Ladysmith was announced I was calling at the C.R.E.'s house, and in answer to my inquiry "Is Mrs. Settle at home?" Giosé, the Maltese butler, replied in tones of excitement, "Mrs. Settle's not at home, but Lady *Smith's* relieved." I had not yet heard the good news which had been telephoned to Mrs. Settle's house, and stood wondering for a moment or two who in the world "Lady Smith" might be, of what she had been relieved and why Giosé was so agitated about it! Malta was all agog. The church bells rang more vehemently than ever, bands played, flags were waved, and the native population wore a carnival air.

When the real carnival came the customary gaieties took place, and the pent-up feelings of British and Maltese alike found vent in a week of revelry. On the first day I rang and rang again for Sara, the original and delightful housemaid at the Lord Nelson Hôtel, but no Sara appeared. Half an hour later she surprised me by mounting the stairs to our rooms singing at the top of her voice and accompanying herself upon a large zinc bath which she beat with a wooden ladle. "Sara!" I cried in horror. "It is Carnival," retorted the unabashed housemaid. "To-day, this week we are all mad." The humours of that household were at any season remarkable, for our landlord was subject to attacks of "nerves" quite as surprising as Sara's access of high spirits. I had invited half the gunroom officers of the *Illustrious* to tea one afternoon and provided an equal number of pleasant and light-

MY LAST WINTER AT MALTA

hearted girls to help me in entertaining them, but at about 2.30 p.m. Mr. Sceberras, black with rage, came to inform me that, as I had ordered the cream myself from the English pastry-cook in Strada Reale instead of through him, *he would not allow me* to have the party! Luckily my husband was on the premises. He went out and bought a kettle, which was boiled on the stove in his dressing-room, and sent his steward to Piazza Miratore to borrow tea-things from Mrs. Stanley. We had a lovely party, but we had forgotten to ask Mrs. Stanley for knives, so the cakes had to be cut with a "pusser's dagger"—a sixpenny clasp-knife issued on board ship—belonging to one of the midshipmen. The following week the remainder of the junior officers and twelve merry maidens were my guests at tea, but we judged it wiser to have the party on board the ship and turned the after-cabin into a lunatic asylum where Dumb Crambo reigned gloriously in the sympathetic absence of the captain.

Before the end of March my husband received with mixed feelings the news that he was appointed Captain* of the R.N. Barracks and Flag-Captain to Sir Henry Fairfax, Commander-in-Chief at Devonport. We were very sorry to leave the Mediterranean, but we felt it might be pleasant to be fixtures in a "stone frigate" for a while after keeping steam up for seven consecutive years.

A few days after we heard that we should soon be homeward bound Prince Waldemar of Denmark

* The officer commanding the dépôt at the R.N. Barracks was not given the rank of Commodore until 1904.

AN ADMIRAL'S WIFE IN THE MAKING

(brother of Queen Alexandra) visited Malta in the ship under his command, and a number of naval officers and their wives were bidden to meet him at dinner at the Palace. The Commander-in-Chief (Sir John Fisher) presented the Governor's naval guests to the Prince, but by some oversight omitted my husband and myself, and I went into dinner feeling uncomfortably insignificant. When the Governor and his male guests joined us in the ballroom after dinner Prince Waldemar steered directly for the place where I was standing at attention, begged me to be seated and remained by my side talking for some minutes. Then he was called away, but presently returned to his seat, and, though I was conscious of his kindness in singling out the one unrepresented lady of the party, I grew embarrassed as time passed and persons of far greater importance than myself were left unhonoured by his notice. How to create a diversion I could not think until Prince Waldemar said something about my husband, and I took the opportunity of asking if I might bring him up and present him to His Royal Highness. "I will go with you," said the Prince; so we crossed the room together, and when I had successfully transferred his attention to Dick I effaced myself. But my manœuvre was only partially successful, for the Prince, who kept early hours on board ship, withdrew with his suite almost immediately, and I was left feeling I had enjoyed far more than my share of Royal favour. The incident was not without result, for a cruiser captain whom I had never before met (though we had been "station mates" for two years) became suddenly

MY LAST WINTER AT MALTA

interested in me. Without the ceremony of introduction he addressed me in tones of considerable cordiality: Would I dine with him on board his ship? Would I name my own date? How did I like the appointment to Devonport? I was bewildered by such unexpected consideration, but even more amused than bewildered, for my new friend's reputation was not unknown to me, and I am sure the Prince also would have been amused had he known how greatly my social importance had been enhanced by his kindness. It was genuine kindness, for on hearing that my brother Bob was Consul-General in Crete, whither the Prince's ship was bound, he offered to take and deliver any letters or parcels I wished to send to Canea.

The impending parting from the *Illustrious*, which had won our affection, not as a ship, but as the source of many friendships destined to endure, weighed heavily upon me. The ball the officers gave in our honour was, like all last things, a qualified pleasure, and when we said good-bye to the shipmates of two years on board the French steamer which was to take us to Marseilles my heart was very heavy. As our ship made her way out of harbour she passed the *Illustrious*. The fo'c's'le was black with men, and when the Commander shouted in stentorian tones, "Three cheers for Sir Richard and Lady Poore" the crashing response brought the tears they could not see to my eyes. Our crack racing cutter had pulled out ahead of the *Illustrious*, and as we passed her the crew cheered lustily and waved the flag I had embroidered for them with the names of the ships whose boats she had beaten.

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That was the last straw; and the handkerchief I waved in response was so drenched that it could scarcely flutter.

CHAPTER LXVII

DEVONPORT

ON St. Patrick's Day (March 17th), 1900, my husband and I arrived in England from Malta. Snow was falling thickly as we crossed the Channel, and after the warmth of spring sunshine in the Mediterranean and the glowing colour of Tunis, where we had spent a day, the dirty white of our chalky cliffs failed to arouse the faintest sentiment of cordiality in my chilled and weary spirit. Even when I proceeded southward to the mitigated rigours of early April in Devonshire the mental thaw was only partial, and my first fortnight spent in a *hôtel* in Devonport was a cheerless time. The duties of a responsible householder with servants to engage and polite warfare to conduct with the Store Officer's Department in the Dockyard depressed me, and I entered upon this new phase of my existence with a tepidity of interest hardly creditable in one promoted to the dignity of occupying an official residence within the walls of the R.N. Barracks at Keyham.

Roger was with us for a part of his Easter holidays and was genuinely pleased to find himself in something approaching more nearly to a home than a London

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flat. He had done so well in games during his two years at Cordwalles, whither he had gone from St. Aubyn's, that his work had suffered, and I contemplated the hockey-cup, the football challenge-belt, and the "highest average" cricket-bat he had won in his last year at Cordwalles with a rather rueful pride. Something had to be done and done quickly, and it was from the skilled hands of Mr. Littlejohns at Greenwich that he passed in the following year into the *Britannia*. But every epidemic that broke out at Dartmouth during his time there was caught by him with an unfailing readiness that proved disastrous to his progress. Extra tuition, necessary and painful, interfered sadly with his games, and but for his success as a light-weight boxer he would have had no trophies to bring home. If only the College at Dartmouth had been built before his day matters would have been far otherwise, but the bulkheads of the old *Britannia* were for many decades the home of assorted microbes, microbes which burst through their annual coats of paint or whitewash with the robust perseverance of crocuses and snowdrops piercing the frozen earth in early spring.

The sad news of the sudden death of Sir Henry Fairfax was announced in the papers on the very morning after our arrival in England, and his kind letter of welcome, written at Naples, reached my husband on the same day. In him my husband lost an honoured friend as well as the commander-in-chief to whom he should have been flag-captain.

Lord Charles Scott succeeded Sir Henry, and my

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husband served on his staff until, realising the impossibility of combining his duties at Mount Wise with those at Keyham Barracks, two and a half miles away, he asked to be relieved of his *aiguillettes*. While he was struggling to perform a trebled part, for he was also destroyer captain, I was so beset with household troubles as often to wish myself back at the Lord Nelson Hôtel in Florian. Cooks, butlers, housemaids and kitchenmaids passed in procession into that house and out again, and the difficulty which (all unskilled and unversed in dockyard ways as I then was) attended the process of settling in nearly turned my brain. The drawing-room carpet was delivered at my door only to be whisked away, despite my protests, to the Harbour Master's Department, where it was cut out and stitched together by sailmakers—a process which took nearly three weeks. Indeed, the ways of the Store Officers' Department were inscrutable, and I had every reason to think that a woman would be useful in running it, but Lord Selborne, then First Lord, held out no hope to me when I suggested that I might apply for the post of Female Adviser and Economist. A large horse and van were sent from the Dockyard to remove an elderly fish-kettle from our premises (it was inelegantly scheduled as *Fish-kettle, decayed, 1*), but when I succeeded in obtaining a dining-table of reasonable proportions its gigantic predecessor was left beside it in the dining-room, and only language of unbecoming severity on my part secured its removal “at an early date.”

One day I was surprised when called upon by a

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particularly dignified gentleman in yet another department to hear him announce with some solemnity, "I have come to speak to you about your pelican." Our cow had been the subject of a recent interview between us, as, owing to the encroachment of building operations, she had been moved from her original "pitch" in the Barracks grounds; but how and why I should be supposed to keep a pelican puzzled me till I realised that my new kitchen-range, known by the name of that warm-hearted bird, was under discussion. The cow was a source of pleasure and comfort, but also of anxiety. She was a very pretty (and delicate) Jersey, and the retired petty officer who combined the duties of gardener and dairymaid was as unused to the management of cows as I. She caught a chill, and Bradford and I had to call in a dairyman to prescribe for her. When she calved she used to spend a fortnight with this useful friend, leaving her progeny to pay for the accommodation and attention she had received. This system worked very well, but until it was evolved Bradford and I spent some anxious days, for our ignorance was abysmal, and a visitor who chanced to say "I hear you know all about *Cowes*" sat stricken with amazement while I poured forth all the information I had been anxiously gleaning as to the management of Jerseys.

Besides the cow we had a stout and amiable horse that stumbled horribly and a wicked but capable Dartmoor pony. Neither of these animals gave me half the pleasure which my husband derived from the use of an elderly but perfectly-trained hireling hunter which was

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stabled at Ivybridge. When I say that her name was "Rosina" I feel sure many naval officers will recognise in her a friend who carried them well and safely over Dartmoor with Mr. Coryton's hounds. She was an institution, a veteran beloved and revered, and many a mile has my husband tramped in the dark by Rosina's side rather than overtire the good and clever beast. Indeed, he failed to appear at dinner one night at the General's because he had considered Rosina's feelings rather than those of his host and hostess, but both Sir William and Lady Butler, appreciating his humanity, freely forgave his absence.

The Butlers were very good to us. We had thought our dancing days over when we left Malta, but at Government House we were not only invited but urged to dance. They were the kindest of hosts as well as persons of exceptional interest and ability. Sir William, whose dignified presence and serious expression were enlivened by the humour and sarcasm that frequently gleamed from his eye and pointed his tongue, would in any case have gained my admiration, but his constant kindness made me his friend. Nothing that I can say will add to Lady Butler's lustre as a painter; in her gentleness and unconventionality she was as unlike the typical great lady of the military world—well drilled and despotic—as she well could be.

My husband found the daily grind of office work very little to his taste after being in command of a ship, and I thought the *depôt* at Keyham a poor substitute for the society afforded by such a pleasant company of officers and their wives as had been

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associated with us in *Hawke* and *Illustrious* days. There was neither unity nor continuity about a dépôt at that period, for it combined the functions of a clearing-house and a turnstile with those of a scrap heap. For the first year the detachment of Marines under Major Oldfield provided excellent company, but when they were relieved a long period of flatness broken only by an occasional social "windfall" ensued, and at the moment of our leaving (December, 1902) I sadly fear that every eye was dry.

It was many months before I found myself on board a seagoing ship—and then it was not by invitation. A French girl staying with us wished to go over a man-of-war, so my husband signalled to the commanding officer of a certain battleship to ask if we might visit her as sightseers. Now I had been used to naval ports less damp and grimy than Devonport, and when I mounted the ladder and set foot on a quarter-deck well covered with coal-dust I said to the first lieutenant apologetically and, as I thought, in sympathetic understanding, "Oh, I am afraid we must be dreadfully in the way. I see you've just been coaling." My remark was not well received. The ship had not coaled for many days!

.

We were at Devonport when Queen Victoria died. On the evening preceding her death we had been into Plymouth by water and met the sunset as we returned to barracks. The whole sky was fretted with bars of gold and purple, and we sat in silence wondering whether the spirit of our brave and faithful Queen—

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our "Supreme Lady"—might not even then be passing gloriously from us into the bright peace of Heaven. That she had valiantly carried her burden to the last and entered into her rest in the very moment of laying it down, instead of lingering on bereft of the keen and active intelligence that was always hers, seemed a fine thing and befitting her dignity, and in this we took comfort and pride. Like so many of her subjects, we had never willingly contemplated the possibility of losing her, never faced the future without her, never pictured anyone in her place. She had been ours for so long. England's Daughter in her early days, she had become in her old age the Empire's Mother, and we mourned her with a sense of personal loss.

CHAPTER LXVIII

PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS

BRICKS and mortar, blocks of stone, dust and mud surrounded us during our years at Keyham. The new officers' quarters arose and completely blocked our view of the Hamoaze, and to reach the pier we had a walk of ten minutes or more over rickety planks and between insecure handrails through a waste of half-dry mud—reclaimed but not regenerate. All this area is now occupied by the extension of the Dock-yard, and order reigns where dead cats and other unpleasing flotsam and jetsam formerly congregated.

PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS

Keyham itself is an unattractive and straggling suburb composed of small houses tenanted almost entirely by the families of sailors and dockyardsmen, and our house inside the barrack walls was squeezed up between the Dockyard railway line and the tramroad from Devonport to St. Budeaux. We often got away for a couple of days in the shooting season, and our visits to the Corytons and the St. Aubyns, the Prideaux-Brunes, the Colliers, the Bannatynes, and the Parkers at Delamore made pleasant breaks in months when we were ready enough to exchange the depressing climate and surroundings of Keyham for the sweet air of places more favoured by Nature and man.

I had plenty to do at Keyham, for the Devonport branch of the Friendly Union of Sailors' Wives, of which I was for some time Vice-President, gave me interesting and congenial work, and there were many visits to be paid in the district for which I was responsible. One day I called upon the wife of a gunner named *Parrott*, and found it hard to keep my countenance when I learnt that he was serving in the *Redbreast* under Commander *Quayle*. It would have been so much more suitable for the Parrot to carry the *Quayle* and the *Redbreast*.

When I asked another sailor's wife the name of her husband's ship she answered shyly: "Well, he was shifted from the *He-cat* to another ship a few months back and I'm not rightly sure how to say the name. It's either the *Hogwee* or the *Ogre*." It may not be superfluous to explain that my friend meant to tell me her husband had left the *Hecate* for the *Hogue*.

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Among those who came to me for help at Keyham during the South African War was a poor stoker's wife who badly needed nourishment during the first weeks after the birth of her baby, and I was glad to be able to help her both privately and officially. Eighteen months later I heard from her that she greatly wished to call a still newer baby after me, and would I tell her my Christian name? I replied that I was honoured by her wish, that I was called *Ida Margaret*, and that I much preferred the latter name. My dismay when I heard the kind creature had burdened the poor infant with the three names *Ida Margaret Poore* before a patronymic as little euphonious as *Dibble* can be imagined.

Our first winter at Keyham was deplorably wet, and it grieved me to see the sopping and muddy boots of the children who attended the Board School close by, for I knew that they must sit long hours with wet feet and that going home to dinner and back again to afternoon school would not improve matters. Quite half the scholars lived in new roads which had not yet been metalled (it was the custom of the principal owner of land at Keyham to attend to the roads only after *all* the houses in them were occupied), so the mud was unavoidable, and I concocted a scheme for providing each of the four hundred and fifty children with goloshes! It had the full approval of the school-mistresses, who kindly undertook to collect from the parents half the money required. Now four hundred and fifty pairs of goloshes at 2s. 1d. (wholesale price) cost £46 17s. 6d., and I collected my half without

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much trouble, but when, as presently appeared, a large number of parents shirked their share of the expense I was left with a debt of £7 and no assets ! This was a sad enough fate for a struggling philanthropist, but more painful still was it for her to see the objects of her solicitude using their precious goloshes as weapons or missiles in fun or earnest as they went to and from school. Filled with mud they produced fascinating results, for their elasticity permitted of their being rolled up before they were sent hurtling through the air, scattering black splashes over shop windows and passers-by as they automatically unfolded. My husband paid up the deficit and refrained from criticism ; and this was very good of him, because it was rather an absurd episode as well as an object-lesson in the danger of grandmotherliness.

CHAPTER LXIX

INTERNATIONAL COURTESIES

My husband was appointed Naval Attaché to Admiral Gervais for the Coronation of King Edward, and went up to town in good time to make the necessary arrangements with Colonel Stuart-Wortley, who was to be his military colleague on the occasion. Mr. Gretton had lent his beautiful house in Ennismore Gardens for the accommodation of the specially-

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appointed Envoy, and all was ready even to the knee-breeches, silk stockings, and pumps which my husband with modest satisfaction contemplated wearing on certain State occasions. But, as everyone knows, the sudden and alarming illness of the King entailed the postponement of all functions and festivities, and on the morning of the day following Admiral Gervais' arrival my husband saw him and his staff depart from Dover. A silver vase of beautiful design sent shortly afterwards to my husband by the French Envoy remains with us as a souvenir of the Coronation *manqué*. The knee-breeches have never been worn, but the black silk stockings are *mine* to this day !

An Italian man-of-war, and a Japanese one also, had been sent to England to represent their respective nations at the Review which should have followed the Coronation, and they lay for some time in the Hamoaze. Admiral Carlo Mirabello was detached in his flagship for this duty, and an important new battleship flew the Japanese ensign close by. It gave us great pleasure to see Admiral Mirabello once more—the same refined, almost ethereal being whose delicacy of thought and charm of manner had captivated my imagination when he commanded the gunnery-ship *Maria Adelaide* at Spezia in 1891—92. And his flag-lieutenant was none other than “ Tom ” Gulli, who as a black-eyed naval cadet had swum stroke for stroke with me (he was *almost* a submarine !) when I surprised myself by finding a mile an easy swim in the warm waters of the Mediterranean. We wished that Service considerations could have admitted of their remaining at Devonport

INTERNATIONAL COURTESIES

over the real Coronation, but the Admiral fretted to rejoin his Squadron and was presently recalled. His next appointment was as Minister of Marine, and we have often wondered how he managed to endure the crushing weight and the continual grind of his high office—a watch-spring working a motor 'bus.

One night we dined at Admiralty House to meet several Japanese officers. When the wine went round at dessert and Lord Charles Scott gave "The King" and then "The Emperor of Japan" the band, to my horror, followed the second toast with a few bars from a tune in the "Mikado!"—the one which sounds as though a regiment of three-legged men with club-feet was on the march. I glanced at the Japanese officer who had taken me in. He was imperturbably solemn as he drank the toast. When we resumed our seats I said, "That music, was it right?" "Verree prittee," he answered smiling, "but not ze same." "What do you call your National Anthem?" I asked. "Banzai," was his reply. I had thought myself that *Banzai!* was a sort of official hurrah! But his English could not bear the strain I should have liked to subject it to by pressing my inquiries, so I left it at that.

An American man-of-war lay in the Sound for several weeks in the summer of 1902, and Captain Rees was her captain. Her name was not the *Mantelpiece* but the far less simple *Monongahela*. Feelings of international courtesy constrained us to accept the invitation of Captain Rees to lunch on board his ship, lying well out in the Sound, on a most tem-

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pestuous day, and my niece Molly Graves and I arrived alongside none too comfortable after a long and violent rolling in the steamboat. The *Monongahela* was as long as her name and very narrow, and the captain's dining-cabin was right aft. Lunch was an excellent but protracted meal, and only a desperate self-respect carried some of us through. When we thought release at hand Captain Rees rose from his seat and recited a rhymed panegyric of his own composition which in somewhat halting couplets gave each of his guests honourable mention. Lord Charles Scott and his flag-lieutenant (the Hon. Lionel Lambart), Rear-Admiral and Mrs. W. H. Henderson, my husband, my niece and myself composed the party (Lady Charles had discreetly excused herself on account of the weather). I am glad to say I preserved a copy of the poetical feast which we enjoyed after the more prosaic banquet.

" TOGETHER.

" On this sunshiny day 'tis my fortunate lot
To offer a toast to brave Admiral Scott ;
And more, to the loveliness, free from all snarls
Of his only Commander-in-Chief—Lady Charles !

" A glass to the hero who never surrenders on
Any complusion—Rear-Admiral Henderson :
And joy to a sweet incarnation of kisses,
Which he never misses : for She is his Mrs. !

" A brave cavalier on the ocean or moor,
We'll join in a goblet to Sir Richard Poore ;
Reserving the sparkle and tints, never shady,
To pale by the charms of his splendour-lit lady !

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“ A man who would scale any bastion or rampart,
A lion with ladies is Lionel Lambart* ;
While, smiling serenely, the Queen of the Waves
Reigns gravely and graciously o’er us—Miss Graves !

“ A health all round to these friends of to-day ;
Friends still may they be when we’re gone far away.
May these golden hours, now fleeting too fast,
Be gems of the future—as pearls of the past.”

By the time the recitation was over we were all reduced to a condition of stupefaction, and I do not know how we managed to thank our host in adequate terms for his entertainment. He showered leaflets (on which the above and other topical effusions were typewritten) upon us as we shoved off, many of which fell into the sea. Then the dashing waves jumped up the ladder and soused the poet’s coat-tails, and “ I remember no more ” until we landed in the Dockyard. Then I found my gown so saturated with the sea-water which had forced itself into the cabin of the steamboat that I could scarcely drag myself up the steps, and the “ Queen of the Waves ” who had only preserved her sovereignty by exercising marvellous self-command, was as thankful as I to reach *terra firma*. That steamboat had been condemned as unseaworthy from the *Captain*, lost off Cape Finisterre in 1871, so, to the discomfort caused us by her antics in a sea-way was joined the actual fear of shipwreck.

* A shocking libel on a most modest man.

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CHAPTER LXX

H.M.S. *JUPITER*

My husband asked for a ship before the three years of his command at the depôt were up, for he had always felt that senior captains needed a further period of sea service in which to "requalify" after a shore billet before being promoted to flag rank, so in December, 1902, he was appointed to the battleship *Jupiter* in the Channel Squadron. On leaving Devonport we travelled together as far as Exeter, whence I went to the Bannatynes at Haldon while he proceeded to Chatham, where he was to take over his new command from Sir Berkeley Milne on the following day. Unluckily we each possessed a small-sized square cabin-trunk—twins to any but the practised eye—and his new valet awarded me the male twin when I left the Paddington train at Exeter. The mistake was discovered by my maid soon after we arrived at Haldon, and the last fresh horse in the stables was hastily despatched to Exeter with the changeling. It just reached my husband in time to prevent the scandal of his taking over in plain clothes, for all the uniform he required was in it, and the contents of my trunk would have been peculiarly inappropriate to the occasion, consisting as they did of a dinner-gown, a pale-blue wadded silk dressing-gown and sundry trailing garments of the night. He returned to Haldon before Christmas, and there Roger, then a third term cadet

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in the *Britannia*, joined us. It was on Christmas night that Roger was called upon to make his first after-dinner speech as the youngest bachelor present. He got very pink, but rose bravely to the occasion and, gripping the table tightly, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, my mother has always told me that little boys should be seen and not heard, so I am sure you will forgive me if I say no more." Then he sat down amidst the applause which I think he deserved.

There was a ball at Haldon on the last night of our visit, and Roger found it so hard to tie his tie to his own satisfaction that he determined not to go downstairs at all "unless the beastly thing would go right." We met the faithful and beloved nurse who had been twenty years in the family as we emerged into the corridor, and her approval of the tie greatly cheered him. "Mum looks ripping, doesn't she?" said Roger. "Very nice, Master Roger, but I do feel sorry her complexion should have lost its polish in all those foreign climates." "I have always thought her the most beautiful woman in the world," retorted Roger, quite offended, "and she isn't a bit changed."

We had taken a flat in Wellington Court and settled down there in the first days of January, 1903, but my husband went to sea very soon and Roger sailed with the rest of his term on an instructional cruise in the *Isis*. The *Jupiter* made an interesting cruise in the Mediterranean as one of a small squadron under the command of Sir Assheton Curzon-Howe. They were sent to Algiers during an official visit of the President of the French Republic (Loubet). The usual functions

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took place, and British naval officers were somewhat aghast to see the President kiss on both cheeks the officers and men, both white and black, whom he decorated at a review on the Champs de Mars. Our Admiral and his four captains were the recipients of the *Légion d'Honneur*, but greatly to their relief they were not embraced by M. Loubet. In those days very few British officers possessed this beautiful decoration, and though its bestowal only amounted to a graceful international compliment, it had significance and value as a token of good feeling. And beyond this the little rosette of *Officier* proved a valuable passport to my husband when he found himself in Paris in the following year rubbing up his neglected French.

In June, 1903, I spent a few days at Portsmouth when my husband was there in the *Jupiter* and Roger in his first ship, the *Magnificent*. Two months later Dick was promoted to Rear-Admiral, and so ended his thirteen years as a captain—a period we shall always look back upon as the most interesting, because the most varied, of our lives. To commemorate those years my husband had the gold (silver-gilt) lace off his captain's uniforms melted down and transformed into an oblong silver tray of Georgian design. Upon it are engraved in two columns the names and dates of all his captain's commands: *Apollo*, *Tourmaline*, *Hawke*, *Illustrious*, *R.N. Barracks*, and *Jupiter*; and between the columns are reproduced the four stripes a captain wears.

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